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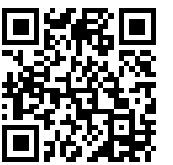

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VIRGINIA AND MAGDALENE;

OR,

THE FOSTER SISTERS.

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BY EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "THE DESERTED WIFE," "THE CURSE OF CLIFTON," "THE MOTHER-IN-LAW," "THE DISCARDED DAUGHTER," "THE LOST HEIRESS," "SHANNONDALE," ETC., ETC.

"It is a book which the oldest and the youngest might alike read with profit. It abounds with the most beautiful scenic descriptions; it displays an intimate acquaintance with all phases of human character; and withal, contains a moral of inestimable value. It is a gem that will well repay a careful perusal."—*Harrisburg Telegraph.*

"This is a story of thrilling and absorbing interest, of overpowering passion, and of gentle forbearance. It is written in a style at once bold, powerful and graphic."—*American Telegraph.*

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VIRGINIA AND MAGDALENE;

OR,

THE FOSTER SISTERS.

CHAPTER I.

TWO NIGHT SCENES ON NEW YEAR'S EVE.

"The wild wind swept the mountain side,
And pathless was the dreary wild,
Where, 'mid the darkest hours of night,
A mother wandered with her child."

"Father in Heaven, I humbly thank Thee! I praise Thee! I bless Thee! Thou hast heard my prayer! Even mine, unworthy as I am! Thou hast heard my prayer! Thou has 'strengthened the weak hands, confirmed the feeble knees,' sustained me through many day's wanderings, and brought me—*almost home!* I have not fainted through hunger, cold, or fatigue, though much, very much I have endured!—nor have I lost my way through the drifted snow, though almost every landmark is buried! There, I know, are Prospect Plains. Yonder, against the horizon, rises Prospect Hill; upon it stands Prospect Hall, with its white chimneys gleaming, ghostlike, against the leaden sky; beyond that hill, in the hollow, lies my father's house, not a quarter of a mile from the Mansion-House, already in sight; my father's house, my mother's home, my birthplace—dear old Blackthorns! Will my father forgive me? Ah, yes!—stern and harsh with the guilty—aye, even with the penitent—he is yet just with the innocent, and tender with the suffering. When he knows all that I am at length permitted to tell him—when he knows that he—whom he so deeply hated, against whom he swore so terrible a vengeance—was not the selfish, arrogant, and triumphing criminal that he deemed him; when he knows that *I*—whom he so bitterly cursed—am not the lost and ruined girl he believes me; when he knows that this baby I bear in my arms, is not the child of sin and shame he thinks it; when he knows that my greatest sin was a sin of disobedience—then! then! he will forgive, receive and love me! Yes! yes! even though I did not return to him on my sixteenth birth-night, widowed, beggared, heart-broken! I, his only child—his lost child! And *my mother!* Will she not forgive me? Ah, yes! my dear mother, my blessed mother!—*she* forgave me the hour in which I left her—no change has come over *her* heart—she loves me still—she will receive me gladly, and when sinking at her feet, I lay my baby in her gentle arms, she will gather it to her bosom with one arm, and raise and embrace me with the other! Ah, I know it! I feel it! I do not feel the cold so bitterly now. The sight of Prospect Hall—the knowledge it gives me that I am almost home, takes away the agonizing sense of piercing cold, and puts fresh warmth into my limbs—and you, my little baby!—*you* have not felt the cold yet—so warm you are, in your little nest, between my shawl and bosom. Little one! I have a mother, too! who loves me as tenderly as I love you, and soon she will warm me, as I am warming you. I grow weary—almost sleepy!—how is this?—and almost in sight of home, too!—rouse, weary heart and brain! bear up, feeble limbs! the goal is near!"

Such was the mental soliloquy of Margaret Hawk, as, folding her infant closer within her shawl, she toiled through the deep snow covering the waste plains of that part of ——— County which borders upon Chesapeake Bay.

What a night it threatened to be! What a scene it *was!* Overhead lowered a dark, portentous sky, by whose cold, steel-like light, could be dimly seen field beyond field of snow, verging off in the distance, until their boundaries were lost in the murky gloom of the heavily clouded horizon.

Straight across the ice-fields before her, and against the distant horizon, arose that dark, uncertain mass, crowned by a faintly gleaming white object, which a stranger could not have distinguished from a darker cloud, tipped with a dim light, but which *she* had called Prospect Hill and Hall.

Nearer, here and there, slightly varying the

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blank monotony of the plains, stood groups of naked forest trees, their skeleton limbs and branches traced sharp and black against the gleaming snow. Here and there also, was a dark line, that marked the border of some piece of woods.

Dotted sparsely about, at wide distances, were little collections of dense shadows, that marked the site of some rural homestead, and from one of these sometimes suddenly darted a gleam of red light, made, perhaps, by an opened door and a warm bright fire within—and sometimes the enlivening sound of a fiddle, that gayly spoke of rural festivity and frolic, for this was New Year's Eve Night, and from many a warm and comfortable home came out the festive sounds, glanced out the festive lights athwart the frozen snow and into the fierce and howling night.

Did she, the wanderer, think of, or envy, the happy New Year revellers? Ah, no! far other thoughts and feelings filled her heart and brain, and if for a moment she turned her eyes to the suddenly darting and quickly withdrawn lights, it was but to use their fitful streaks to guide her on her way to a far dearer light.

She was now toiling up the gradually ascending rise of the plains as they swept on from Chesapeake Bay towards Prospect Hill, and straining her eyes to catch a glimpse of that "dearer light," that distant "light of home," which yet for many hours, she cannot see—will she ever see it?

Many, many weary days of this wintry weather had she wandered, with her infant in her arms, and now, at last, upon this New Year's Eve Night, her birth-night, she was "almost home."

But oh! it was a scene so waste and weird! so desolate! a night so dark and piercingly frosty, when, through the fierce, black cold, toiled on this young, slight, thinly clad girl, sheltering her infant in the folds of her only shawl.

She was suffering excruciating pangs—pangs which only those long exposed to severe cold can know, not only the fierce smarting, aching and *burning* of her limbs—for the sense of intense cold is like that of fire—but worse than all, that intolerable anguish in the chest, when, finally, in the expressive language of the poor—"*the cold strikes to the heart!*" She was suffering all this, but had aroused all her energies to bear it.

She toiled on and on, slowly, with extreme difficulty, but still on and on.

Already she was ascending Prospect Hill—a d lights from the windows of Prospect Hall glanced down the hill. Oh! for strength to get over this hill and reach the hollow on the other side! there was home!

She toiled on and on—but now the agony of the cold was giving place to a feeling of extreme weariness, of extreme drowsiness, even of heart as well as brain—and now came the strong temptation to stop and rest—if she could stop and rest a little while—*then* she would be so much recruited as to be able to reach home all the sooner!—and—climbing this hill, was so much more wearisome than any other part of her wearisome journey had been. She looked around for a resting place.

A bare rock, bared by the drifting of the snow, offered the only seat. She sat down upon it, and no sooner had she sunk to a resting posture than that feeling of irresistible sleepiness—sleepiness affecting heart as well as brain, as I said, came with power upon her, and her eyes were about to close, when something, it might have been the hand of her infant groping for her bosom, or the finger of her guardian angel, touched her, and she suddenly remembered that this feeling of extreme drowsiness following the pangs of severe cold, if indulged in, becomes the precursor of a sleep ending in death. Once more her spirit rising in its strength brought up all her sinking physical energies to their posts, and she arose and stood up—her limbs felt twice their natural weight, and it was with extreme difficulty she could raise one heavy foot after the other—her arms also appeared no longer to fold her babe by their own muscular power, but seemed to be locked around it and frozen there, there was no feeling in them.

She toiled on—it was almost a miracle, but she reached the top of the hill—she passed Prospect Hall a quarter of a mile on the right—as she passed it she saw, without observing, lights glancing rapidly across the windows, and from window to window, and from one floor to another, as though some event of unwonted bustle, hurry and importance, was taking place. She passed the lighted hall, without a second glance—she did not care for that, though there lived the gentleman planter, of whose great estate her father was manager or overseer, the distinguished Joseph Washington, Chief Justice of the Circuit Court—she passed the manor-house without a second glance, for *then*—low gleaming in the shadowy hollow burned the star of her hope, at the sight of which her dim eyes brightened, for it shone from her mother's own room. It seemed nearer than it was—it was a quarter of a mile off yet, but what was that to her who had travelled so many miles already. She braced for the last time her fast failing frame and labored on.

Now a flake of snow fell and froze upon her colder brow—she looked up—several hours of night travel had given her an owl-like vision in the dark, and she saw that the black and heavy sky was lowered very near the earth, at the same time that the rising wind foretold a tremendous tempest. She toiled on a little faster She has reached the foot of the hill—she has crossed the hollow—she is at the outer gate of her father's yard! pursued by the wintry storm, for the wind has suddenly risen to a fearful height, and the snow and hail is whirling fast and furiously around

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her, hiding from her eyes the blessed, guiding star, the "light of home."

She felt the gate by struggling up against it—she wished to open it, but her arms were fast locked by the cold, and she could not move them. She pressed her body against it, pushed it partly open, and slipped through. She was in her father's yard! By fitful gleams now she could see the light—she pressed on towards it.

But now!—what now? have extreme cold, hunger and fatigue completely exhausted her strength? Shall she sink now? She staggers—wishes to throw her hands up to her head, but they are frozen stiff—she sinks slowly in the snow—her senses are dulled—her brain grows extremely heavy—her head falls, and she looses all consciousness in a deep sleep—while the hail and snow whirl thickly over her.

And the child—is it awakened by this? Wrapped up warmly in the shawl, and secured in its little nest, formed by the frozen arms and bosom accustomed to motion, it slept on soundly, only slightly moving as its mother sank down in the snow, and with a gentle infant sigh dropping into perfect rest, as she grew still. Only for an instant, however, did vigilant nature permit her to lie in this death sleep. Even in the sudden and deep sleep—in the profound and utter unconsciousness of mind and insensibility of body—when the chilled blood had left the frozen extremities, and was slowly, slowly stagnating in the heart—*then* that insufferable agony which attends a life and death struggle commencing in the heart—that intolerable oppression of the lungs—that sense of suffocation—that feeling of present death—that instinct of life—suddenly shocked her from the death-sleep and set her wide awake, and shaking violently with extreme terror! Death was on her! There was no mistaking its presence! She recognized and acknowledged it! Fast as a powerful effort of will, a desperate struggle for life sent apart the blood that stagnated at her heart, it rolled back again and stopped. Death was on her! Oh! for strength to reach that door-step not far off—to die at home, to die in a bed—with her mother's arms under her head, with her mother's face looking down upon hers—with her baby warmed and fed and sleeping in a cradle—then would death be not so terrible. A desperate, a spasmodic effort, and the stagnated blood once more circled freely through her heart and lungs, leaving them to free action—and she struggled to her feet and staggered on—through the driving sleet, toward the lighted window.

She gains the door-step—she cannot unlock her arms, but she will push against it—she does so, but the push has no force, and makes no noise—the window by its side is alight—she will go there and look in and see them, and ghost-like, stand until they see her. She staggers towards the window.

It is an old fashioned casement window with iron sashes, and diamond-shaped panes, and it opens on hinges, and reaches almost down to the ground. There was never any shutter or curtain to that window—vines grew over it, but they are now of course dry. It was her favorite seat, Summer and Winter, when she lived at home. She used to sit there and sew and watch the flowers blooming—and listen to the bees that hummed in the hive at the end of the house in Summer, and in Winter watch the snow-birds, happy, hardy little things, hopping about—and at all seasons amuse herself with the great goings-on before the great house on the hill, plainly visible from this window. Now she struggled towards her favorite window. She leaned against the frame-work, while the snow and hail whirled round her. She looked in—saw the blazing fire, the strong light and deep shadows of the large room; she saw her mother—and then—darkness swam in upon her brain—and she sank; this time the babe waked up, moaned, groped with its little hand for her bosom, found it, and comforted, sank to sleep again. *She* had sunk down in full view of the room within—separated only by the glass from those for the sake of meeting whom she would have lived a thousand years in purgatory—dying—but with no strength of limbs to go to them, or of voice to make them hear her. When the darkness that had temporarily overswept her vision, passed away, and she turned her dying eyes within—there, right opposite, blazed the great fire on the broad hearth—there, on the right hand, sat her mother in a large chair, with a basket of stockings by her side, and one drawn on her hand, which she was darning; and on the left sat her father, with his spectacles on his nose—a stand by his side, with a large Bible and a candle upon it. He had, perhaps, just closed the blessed book, or was just about to open it. How familiar everything looked—how dear everything was; the two dogs basking before the fire. Yes! even the great black iron andirons with the lion's heads, and the large brass brackets on the tall mantle-piece; she saw them, and then her dying gaze was fixed upon her mother's face. That suffering face had faded and grown aged since she saw it last. Ah! did she not know why! Oh! but to be reconciled to that mother again! She strained her failing eyes to gaze longer on that dear face; there were tears in the gentle eyes—ah! did she not know for whom they were shed? And then she endured a sharper pang than the pains of death, and such a death! at the thought of what her mother would suffer, when her corpse should be found there in the morning. She should die without telling them all they ought to know—would then her father forgive his dead child—and permit her mother without rebuke to mourn her? She turned with difficulty her eyes upon her father's face. It was set and stern, and harsher than ever. As she looked, he fixed his eyes upon her mother, and spoke angrily—s

saw by the expression of his countenance, and by the tears that rolled down her poor mother's face—she felt that they were remembering and talking about her. Was not this her sixteenth birth-night—the night upon which her mother had promised, years ago, that she should have a white cambric dress, and a party—if she should live to see it? Well! she *had* lived to see it—and assuredly to-morrow she would have the white dress and the party; but the dress would be a shroud, and the party would gather around her coffin. Clouds came over her eyes, intercepting the sight of her mother; clouds came over her soul, hiding the face of her Heavenly Father. Again the blood tided to her heart, and stagnated there; again came the insufferable oppression of the lungs—the intolerable agony of suffocation—the last struggle of life and death; and in the extremity of terror and insanity, her soul cried out—"I die! I die! I leave my ruined and fallen dwelling place! to go *where?* Just God! I dare not mock Thy throne with a dying prayer for pardon, now! nor think that the sins of a life may be blown away by the expiring breath gasping one word, 'Pardon.' But, oh! Merciful Father! remit my doom! remand my soul back to earth for another probation, in another life—of suffering, of expiation—only another life! a life in which I can watch over this child with her heritage of orphanage and suffering—a life of redemption." So raved the dying girl. A moment more and the agonized heart was at rest.

In the meantime, the storm increased in fury; the snow and hail whirled rapidly around her, threatening to bury her in a drift.

Now, reader, we will enter the farm house.

Now sylvan occupation's done
And o'er the chimney rests the gun,
And hang in idle trophy near
The game-pouch, fishing-rod and spear,
Now every terrier rough and grim,
And grey-hound with his length of limb,
And pointer now employed no more
Cumber the kitchen's oaken floor,
Now in his stall the impatient steed
Is long condemned to rest and feed,
And from the snow encircled home
Scarce dares the hardiest step to roam,
Since path is none, save that to bring
The needful water from the spring.

Heap on more wood! The wind is chill,
But let it whistle as it will
We'll keep our New Year merry still,
Each age has deemed the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer.—*Scott.*

"Awful Heaven! what a night! How the storm hurtles against the windows! There'll be four et of snow frozen on the ground to-morrow. Such a stormy exit of the old year and advent of the new, I never saw—*but once before*—and I am sixty years old," said Adam Hawk, plunging a heavy poker between the great smouldering logs, and making them blaze and roar like the report of an explosion, and sinking back in his old oak-chair with a heavy groan—which was answered by a deep sigh from his wife, as she said,

"God help Mary Washington, if she be brought to bed on such a night as this, for neither doctor nor midwife can approach her."

"As to that, the granny has been staying in the house for the last week. I brought her over myself from Hardbargain."

"There was where you went with the ox-team last Saturday—and never told me about it!"

"Am *I* a gossip? Yes! there was where I went! The young fool got scared as her time came near, and none but the judge and the niggers about the house, and so the judge told me to gear up and go and fetch Mrs. Comford."

"Poor Mary—poor motherless girl—no wonder! What trials have been hers! and how sweetly she has borne them! her mother dying when she was but a few weeks old—her brother waylaid and murdered the day after her wedding—her father struck with apoplexy on receiving the news—the loss of the property—but that was a trifle; and then the sudden death of her husband, in the second month of their marriage; and all happening in less than ten months! Poor Mary! poor, darling child! no wonder she is nervous! Why didn't you tell me, Adam? I, who am like her second mother in an humble way, for I raised her. I ought to have gone and staid with her to comfort her? And I would this blessed night, if it wasn't so dark and stormy. Why didn't you tell me while it was so I could go, Adam?"

"Just because I knew if I told you anything about it, you *would* go—and I didn't want you to go! that's all about it."

"Oh! Adam! and she such a sweet child to us—just like our own child, much as she is above us—such a blessing to me always—such a comfort to me in my sorrow. Oh, Adam!"

"I tell you, then, you were not *fit* to go to her! with that fit-i-fied thumping of the heart and stopping of the heart, that runs in your family, and that you have had so bad ever since—since—d— it! God forgive me—that has followed you for the last year."

"Yes, Adam, yes! but I think I should have died with it, if it had not been for my sweet child Mary. Think of that time when you hurried half crazy off to town to search for our poor—"

"WOMAN!"

"Well, then, when you hurried off and left me here—not knowing how ill I really was with grief—when I couldn't move but that the palpitation of the heart would nearly kill—couldn't drop into a doze, but that the stopping of the heart would almost suffocate me think then of

dear Mary—fresh from the death-bed of her husband—in the new grief of her young widowhood leaving the mansion-house and coming down here to sleep with me—or rather, to lie in the bed with me– to lie close to me with her arm thrown over my side, so lightly, so softly, to note the beatings of my heart while I went to sleep; and to rub my side if she felt it beating slowly—and staying with me all day to guard me from all sudden noises and shocks that should start my heart to palpitating again. Think of her continuing that until her own delicate situation gradually confined her to the mansion-house."

"And now then, that was no more than her duty to do. Were not you a mother to her in her helpless infancy? Wouldn't she have died if you hadn't divided your own child's milk with her? Tell me that?"

"Yes, yes—so she would, for she was a very delicate baby—but then *that* was so natural, a heathen would have done that for a poor little orphan babe—too delicate to be raised by hand!"

"No a heathen wouldn't, either—no, nor a christian either, upon the terms that you did—refusing to take a dollar, poor as you were!"

"Oh, Adam! as if I could have sold my breast milk and my tenderness to a poor little babe! an orphan babe, and I a mother, with a mother's feelings. No, Adam, I was a healthy woman then, and could very well nurse two babies—and we were not in need. But if it had been otherwise, and I had been the poorest houseless wanderer in the world, and any one had asked me to nurse a baby, and offered me wages, I should have said, 'No—give me house room, necessary food and raiment, and I will be strengthened to nurse your baby—but no money for *that*—give me sewing to do meanwhile, and pay me for *that* if you like.' No sale of nature's tenderness, that is my feeling."

"And a very foolish feeling it is! People sell everything—stock in trade, labor—that is nothing—but, their affections, their intellect, honesty, health, truth—soul and body they sell for money, and call it 'business,'—so you see yours is a very stupid feeling."

"Well, it's *my* stupid feeling, and it keeps me warm and comforts me, which is best of all."

"Stuff and nonsense!"

"'Whoso receiveth one of these little ones in My name, receiveth Me.'"

"Hold your tongue, Peg! you—hush!"

"Do good and lend—hoping for nothing in return."

"Will you stop?—s'pose all the world were to do that? Pretty prey the simple would be to the subtle!"

"If *all* the world were to do that, then there would be no 'simple' dupes, and no 'subtle' cheats, but all would be wise and good, and the kingdom of God would come. In the meantime, let all that have it in them to do good, do it for the *sake* of good, hoping for nothing in return, and they will lose nothing, even in this world—'Cast thy bread upon the waters, and after many days it shall be found.'"

"Peg, *hush!* I hate to hear women preach—they don't understand the Scriptures. St. Paul says that women should be silent, or inquire of their husbands.'"

"Well, then—but you have not quoted right, I think—I think women were to be silent in the church, or in the congregation. No matter, I only wanted to *remind* my husband—for I like to prove a Scripture promise fulfilled—that our bread cast upon the waters has been *found*. When I took little Mary Virginia—though I did not take her for the sake of good, but only because I somehow couldn't help it—Heaven keep me from the deceit of taking credit I do not merit—when I took little Mary Virginia for love and mercy, and not for money—the Lord knows that I never thought it would turn out as it has! But see! what a heart's comfort she is to *me*—while her father loaded you with benefits, recommending you to Judge Washington as a proper man to manage his estate. And when the Judge moved into the new mansion house, upon the marriage of his son with Mary—then, for the love he bore his daughter-in-law, our foster child, he gave you this fine old farm-house to live in, with nearly all the furniture, just as he himself had occupied it for all his life. Ah! that should be a lesson on faith for our whole lives, Adam! That should teach you that my going to comfort my sweet child in her trial, will never hurt me. And, oh! if it did, it is still my duty to go. It is a duty I owe her. She has done so much for me!—more than any other young lady in the world would do for anybody except her own mother."

"You have done enough for her, as I said before."

"I have done nothing but what we have been abundantly compensated for, and nothing but what any heathen under the same circumstances would do—let alone a Christian."

"And I repeat to you that you are a fool! Christian!—yes, many that pass for good Christians, aye! and that *are* good Christians, would not undertake what you did! Mary herself, good as she is, would not do it! Come! there! now! are you silenced?"

"No—for Mary would do it!"

"*What?*"

"I say Mary would do as I did."

"Yes, perhaps, if she had been in your sphere of humble life, she might have taken some lady's child to nurse, without pay, for you have brought her up to be just such a fool as you are yourself—but I am not talking of what might have been, I am talking of what *is*, and I say that Mrs. Mary Virginia Washington—the young lady

Prospect Hall—would not now take an orphan baby that might be cast helpless on her mercy to nurse with her own, at her own breast—to save its life! good Christian as she is!'

"Mary would! if there was no one else to do it, Mary would!"

"Folly!"

"Mary would."

At this moment a terrible blast of wind, driving on an avalanche of snow and hail against the side of the house, shook the firm building to its foundation.

"Awful Lord! what a night! It was just such a night, sixteen years ago, that my Maggy was born!"

"Woman! that name!"

"Well! yes! I can't help it! I can't! My heart is broken this night! God! what a blurl was that! Surely the window sashes will be blown out! Yes, yes—sixteen years ago—how forcibly this night and storm brings back this night sixteen years ago! When my poor baby was born! Ah! she is a baby still! Poor little one! Did not the biting cold and the hurtling snow-storm then, betoken all the wretchedness that has come upon her? They say that the earlier a child is born in the year, the more fortunate will be its destiny; and the later in the year, the more adverse will be its fate! My poor only one was born at eleven o'clock, old year night.

The tears were running down the poor mother's face, and the stern father himself seemed struggling with some strong emotion—the muscles of his iron face worked—he clutched at his grizzled hair, and then burst out in fury, exclaiming—

"No more of her! God! you will drive me mad! No more of her, I say! I wish I *knew* that she was dead! I would that she were stretched out here, stiff and stark, at my feet! Oh! that I could find her! I would shut her up a day to prepare her soul to meet its Maker, and at night I would take the life I gave her! I would put her to death! Even as Abraham would have offered up his spotless son—even as Jeptha sacrificed his virgin daughter—so I would immolate my fallen child! would purify her as by fire!"

A low growl and mutter came from some obscure corner of the large and dusky room, and the words in a gutteral tone—

"You'd burn her up, would you, you sanctified old sinner! and swing for it in this world, and be sent to h— in the other—which, may the Lord grant! Amen."

But these words, in the howling and shrieking of the storm, attracted no attention. Another blast of wind, more furious than the first, shook the house, until the substantial building seemed to sway to and fro like a slight sapling.

"Ah! Merciful Father! then what a storm it is! How much damage will be done, the Lord only knows! Heaven be with poor Mary, and grant that if she is brought to bed to-night, it may be after midnight!"

"I wonder what keeps that folly running into your head! Why should it happen to-night, anyhow! of all nights in the week—and then that cursed folly about the old year and the new year, and happiness and misery depending upon the difference between them! And if there were anything in that pagan superstition—why, who is Mary Washington, that a patent for a happy life is to be taken out for *her* child, any more than anybody else's? Stuff! what puts such things in your head?"

"Ah! I don't know! but I'm sorely troubled to-night! This horrible storm! It shatters my heart so! It brings again the night when my Maggy—"

"Death! if you do but *hint* her name again, I shall launch such a malediction upon her head, that you shall die to hear it!"

"Ah! do not be so obdurate—consider—"

"If I could but find her I would smother her! Oh! the shameless creature! dressed up in rouge and satin and jewels, now revelling off the old year among companions only less degraded than herself! Do you think that if I knew her place of abode, I would not enter it and strangle her before her fellows? Satan's fiends! but my fingers strengthen and contract at the bare thought!"

"Oh! do not talk so! You are mistaken! she is not *that!* She never could be *that!* Our child—Mary Virginia's foster sister could not be *that*. Mary, too, wept when she was lost; but Mary believes her pure; Mary prays with me for her recovery. And even if she were betrayed, guilty, lost—Mary would love her and pray for her still—so the sinless feels for the sinful. The spotless Son of God was merciful! Only sinners wish to take vengeance on sinners. Do not you be one of them. The good ever pity and wish to recover and redeem the erring—do you be like *them*. My dear baby! My little one! My Maggy! Her sin at the *very* worst was only too much! too blind love! God will redeem her! God will hear my prayers, and—Mary's—God will pity us! God will redeem her and bring her back to me! my little one! my Maggy!"

"Hush! HUSH!" almost howled the father, starting up and clutching the iron-gray hair on his temples with both hands. Just at this moment, in the pausing of the wind, was heard a violent knocking at the door.

The overseer strided to it—pulled—jerked it open, letting in an avalanche of snow; and behind and through it, a great big negro man, closely wrapped in a coat with manifold capes, and a fox-skin cap coming down over his ears.

The first thing done was to close the door against the driving wind and sleet, by the united efforts of Adam Hawk and the negro, and then

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the latter spoke in a hurried voice to the overseer, who answered,

"Yes! hasten back and tell the judge I will be there instantly," and re-opening the door cautiously a little way, he let the man out again into the tempest, and closing it behind him, returned to the fireside, saying,

"It is as you feared, Peggy—Mary Washington is ill! The Judge has sent to me to come to the house immediately."

"Something told me so! Something really told me so! Oh! Heaven be with Mary!"

"Come! stir about! Get me my great coat and mufflers!"

"Yes! but I'm going myself!"

"You! You're mad! You'd perish in the storm before you got a dozen yards from the house."

"Oh! I *must* go! I should die to stay here and know that Mary was suffering, when I could not aid or comfort her."

"Then you'd die any way, and it's better to die in the house than in the storm—so you'll stay where you are."

"I cannot! *Indeed* I cannot! I must go to Mary!"

Adam Hawk turned round, and fronting her, said,

"Peggy! now you understand that you are *not* to go! So, therefore, do not take up my time in needless talk; but help me on with my coat."

She said no more, fearing indeed to delay him, but helped him to equip himself for the tramp through the tempest. She lighted the lantern for him, let him out, shut the door behind him, and then began to prepare herself to brave the storm also—for her mind was set to go to Prospect Hall that night to attend her foster child. She put on a pair of thick shoes, and drew over them a pair of her husband's long, thick, yarn stockings. She put on a hood, tying a thick veil over it to muffle her face; lastly, wrapping a heavy cloak around her form, she opened the door to set out for Prospect Hall. She had no lantern, and as she groped her way out, buffetted about by the furious tempest, she stumbled and fell over something, at the same time that a child's feeble wail and warm breath passed her face. She struggled upon her knees, and astonished to the last degree, sought to raise the object over which she had fallen. It was altogether not a very heavy burthen—she lifted it, and then—! a wild cry of mingled joy, anguish, and despair burst from her lips above the howling of the storm. This cry speedily brought out from the house an old deformed creature, who, stumbling and blundering through the tempest, pitched at her side.

"What now! What now!" growled this object.

"Oh, God! it is—it is—it is Maggy! Help me to save her."

The dwarf, who possessed great strength, lifted the body and bore it in the house, followed by the half crazy woman. He laid the body on a settle, and ran to bring a bed from an upper chamber, and cast it down on the floor before the fire, while the delirious mother was frantically rubbing her temples, rubbing her hands, and trying to extricate the living baby from the frozen arms of the body.

She at last succeeded in extricating the half-dead babe from the locked arms, and, taking some pillows from the laden dwarf, laid it down on a hastily prepared pallet on the settee. Then calling the dwarf to assist her in raising the body, she carried it into her own bedroom, where a warm fire was burning. This was the adjoining room, and here she gave her whole attention to desperate efforts at re-animating the frozen limbs. Thankful for even male help at her extreme need, she allowed the dwarf to assist her in divesting the stiff and swelled arms of the sleeves partly frozen to them, and then to draw off the stiffly-frozen dress, and lay the cold form in a large warm blanket. During all this time, she would cast anxious glances of speechless agony at the dwarf, as if to seek comfort from his apparently better experience; and for some time the latter would shake his head sorrowfully, but persevere in his efforts at resuscitation. At last his dull eyes brightened, and touching her, he said,

"Not dead!"

"Thank God!" "Oh! thank God!" said the mother's raised eyes and clasped hands, but not a word was spoken in reply.

"May die, though!" said the dwarf

But the mother's hopes were raised, and she toiled on vigorously, still zealously seconded by the dwarf. At last, when there was a slightly perceptible warmth under the arms and about the region of the heart, the dwarf got up and said,

"I'm going to the child!" and waddled into the other room.

She looked after him with a countenance expressive of her gratitude; said nothing, though, but kept on with her efforts of recovery. At last the white breast slightly convulsed—the white throat throbbed—both grew still—then the blue lips and eyelids quivered—a deep sigh, and the large, wondering eyes were wide open, and gazing into her mother's face.

"Maggy, my darling, it is I—don't you know me?"

The large, dark eyes—so very large and dark, in contrast with the wan face—were still fixed wonderingly in her mother's face.

"It is *mother*, Maggy—don't you know her?"

The blue lips moved, though the gaze was not withdrawn. Her mother bent down to catch, perhaps, her faintly murmured words.

"*Dead, too?*"

"*Who* dead, Maggy, my dear? Nobody's *dead!*"

The blue lips faintly smiled, and she tried t

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raise the still stiffened arms—failed to do so—and then faintly smiled as if at her failure, and during all this while, her feeding gaze was not for an instant withdrawn from her mother's face, that seemed a feast to their long-starved vision, and all this while her mother still rubbed and bathed and pressed her frosted arms. At last her gaze turned anxiously around, and her lips moved. Her mother stooped down to catch her faint words—

"My baby!"

Peggy had forgotten the strange little one in her anxiety, but now she went to the door, and opening it, slightly spoke to the dwarf, who immediately came in with the child, warmly wrapped up, in one hand, and the mug of warm pap in the other. The child was too young to smile yet, but it looked quite alive to the comforts of warmth, food and tender nursing. Mrs. Hawk took tne baby in her arms, and carried it to the side of the bed. Maggy smiled, and seemed satisfied, and her mother returned the babe to the charge of its rough though tender nurse, who took it from the room, and soon after returned, bearing a glass of warm cordial, which he brought to the bed, saying,

"She must drink this."

Peggy put it to her daughter's lips, and she drank it slowly, and was revived.

"Mother," she said, in a low, distinct voice.

"Mustn't talk!" said the dwarf.

"Don't talk, Maggy, darling; wait a minute till you are stronger."

"Mother!" persisted the dying girl, but in lower, fainter tones.

Peggy bent down to her face.

"Mother, I was in Heaven just now. I thought you were there when I saw you. Mother, God has forgiven me. You have forgiven me—ask father also to forgive me!"

"My darling child, my Maggie, he must—he will—and Mary Virginia loves you still—she will come to see you."

"Mother," she murmured, in a still lower voice, "sit on the side of my bed, and raise me in your arms—I feel like I was your little child still—so helpless I am! There! that is nice—let me now lay my head on your bosom—put my two stiff hands together in my lap, mother, and hold them between your own—there, now, mother, listen to me, for I have something to tell you."

"*She mustn't talk!*" repeated the dwarf, emphatically, as he sat at the foot of the bed, nursing the baby.

"Maggie! dear Maggie, don't talk! I know what you want to say—I believe it, Maggie, beforehand! I always did—so did Mary!"

"Bless dearest Mary!"

"SHE MUSTN'T TALK! SHE MUSTN'T TALK!" desperately exclaimed the dwarf, wringing his hands.

"Hush! hush!" my darling Maggie!"

"Let me—once more—where is father?—I saw him through the window before I fell!"

"He is gone to the mansion house."

"Ah! what there? I saw, in passing—"

She paused—her countenance changed—then reviving an instant, she said, suddenly,

"Mary Virginia is near her confinement!"

"Yes, darling, yes!"

A divine light radiated her countenance an instant; she exclaimed,

"My prayer is heard!"

"Oh! oh! oh!" cried the dwarf, wringing his hands violently.

The gray of death crept over her countenance—the blood flowed to her heart for the last time, and stilled then forever—one moment of suffocating agony, and all was over!

"Oh, Maggie! I shall not be long behind you!" said the bereaved mother, in a tone of strange calmness. It was the apathy of complete despair.

"We might have saved her!" groaned the deformed, as though communing with himself rather than addressing the mother.

"No, no!—we could not! Not hunger, cold, toil or sorrow killed her—though these helped! It was disease of the heart!—brought on by these. It is that which will take me soon after her," she said, in the same quiet tone.

"We might have got over these rapids! We might have kept her on a little longer!"

"I am content! I am content!" said Peggy.

"Ah! it is sadder to hear you say that, than it would be to see you sad and weep!"

"Oh! if you knew! if you knew! what I have felt for her this last year, you would feel how much better it is to see her here, and to know that not many hours hence I shall lie by her side! Yes! I know it! it is only by an effort that I now keep my death at bay! it will advance upon me soon and take me to her."

Then she gently laid the head of the dead girl down, settled her limbs, covered her, and kneeling by the side of the bed, raised her soul in prayer to God. Meanwhile the dwarf laid down the sleeping infant, replenished the fire, and stole quietly away from the house for assistance.

Half an hour after this a heavy tramp was heard without, the door was pushed open, the sound of stamping feet stamping off the snow in the next room, and then the overseer's gruff, harsh tones, calling out,

"Peggy! Peggy, I say! why have you suffered this fire in the keeping-room to go down? Where are you now?"

Peggy opened the door and came out.

"Well! you had laid down, I suppose," he continued, still shaking off the snow; "that's right! I don't find fault with that, only you might have made Bruin put on a couple of heavy logs to keep the fire hot for me—coming in out

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of the cold. Thank God the storm is over, and it has cleared off. Come, help me off with my great-coat. Well! the child is born! It is a girl—and as you were anxious upon the point, I made inquiry as to the precise hour and moment of its birth—and am happy to tell you, that the family, by some strange oversight, are in a glorious state of uncertainty as to whether the babe was born this year or last—the nurse swearing that it was one minute before twelve, and the doctor affirming that it was two minutes after—so that it is a point of doubt, whether the child was born in the last death-throes of the old year, and is therefore to be unutterably miserable—or whether it came into the world twin-born with the New Year, and is therefore to be extremely happy," concluded Adam Hawk, in a tone of coarse irony, without seeing the fixed despair of his wife's look. "Well! why do you not answer me? You haven't said a word yet, to this hair-breath point of dispute; did you hear me say that the babe was safely brought forth between one minute to twelve and two minutes after?"

"Yes! That was the time our Maggy died. Come here, Adam!"

He did not appear to hear her first words, but something in her manner constrained him to go where she led him, into the bed-room.

There lay the dead girl; her features in the beautiful composure of sleep, and the expression that of innocent childhood. The bed and its coverings were all of white, and upon it she lay extended; the white counter-pane drawn up smoothly over her form as far as her chest. Her face was exposed, and its marble whiteness formed a ghastly contrast to the arched eye-brows, long eye-lashes resting on the snowy cheek, and the long locks of hair laid down each side, all of jet black.

He approached the body with a dark and threatening scowl upon his countenance—it softened and cleared as he gazed long and wistfully—then grew suddenly anxious—he stooped and raised the body. The long, silky black hair fell sweeping away from the pallid brow. He anxiously, nervously placed his hand upon her temples, upon her heart—and muttered low, in gentle tones,

"Maggy—Maggy, my child! my dear child! Wife! this is *not death!* It is a swoon! Let me lay her down, again! My God, Peggy, why don't you move."

He was all this time rubbing her hands, feeling her wrist for the pulse—running his hand in her bosom to feel for the beating of her heart; himself trembling all the while. The sternness of the would-be uncompromising judge had completely given place to the tenderness and anxiety of the father.

"Water, Peggy! Vinegar! hartshorn! Good God! woman, why do you stand there like a statue?"

"Adam! she is dead!"

"Dead! and you tell me so, so calmly! dead! It is *not* so!"

"Adam, she *is*."

"Dead! you stand there saying she is dead! You do not love her as I do! dead! Oh, God! oh, God! It is *not* so! My Maggie! my Maggie!" he exclaimed, frantically rubbing her hands. His wife went to him and put both her arms around him, and said,

"Adam, dear, leave the dead in quiet! It is irreligious to disturb her sacred corpse so—leave her body, Adam—come away! her spirit is with God!"

"I cannot! I cannot! You never loved her as I love her, or you would not think I could! You would not be so quiet! Oh! my Maggie, dead! dead with my harsh words in your memory! dead without receiving my forgiveness!"

"Adam, do not grieve so bitterly! Remember if she did not receive your pardon, neither did she ever hear your curse!"

"Curse! I *never* cursed her! Curse my Maggie! Oh! if I had I should have been mad! If ever I came nigh to do it—afterward I always silently prayed to God not to mind what I said in my wrath! but to bless her—to bless her! Oh! dead! without knowing how tenderly I loved her still!"

"Adam, she spoke of you with affection in her dying hour. She told me to ask you in her name for pardon. She died in my arms—she died in blessed peace."

But still Adam Hawk tore his gray hair and refused to be comforted; and still Peggy maintained her composure, reproached all the time by her husband with not loving their child as well as he did.

At last Peggy took the infant from the foot of the bed, and bringing it to him, said—

"This is her child, Adam!"

"Her child?"

"Yes, Adam!'

"Away with it! I won't look at it! I hate it! It has caused her death and my despair! It is that d—d devil's child, and with some look of him about it, too Away with the brat!"

"But, Adam—"

"Away with it, I say! I don't know it!"

"But, Adam, it is Maggie's orphan baby!"

"It caused her death! I don't know the thing! I won't own it! *Out of my sight with it, or by—*" furiously broke out Adam Hawk.

Peggy, frightened and distressed by the screaming of the babe, now wide awake, hurried away with it.

Morning was now dawning on the plains, and the red light of the coming sun was reflected on the snow when Peggy opened all her windows, and quietly set about preparing breakfast, as though nothing had occurred; but any watchful observer might have noticed that from time to

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time she would turn gray-pale—pause, and then go on again.

Bruin, the dwarf, had returned with one or two of the nearest neighbors, and they were in the next room, preparing the dead girl for burial, and wondering alike at the singular composure of the mother, and the despairing sorrow of the father—the conduct of each, upon the occasion, so opposite to what might have been expected from either. But this was perfectly natural and consistent, had they taken the trouble to look beneath the surface of things.

The sun was just rising above the horizon, and projecting the shape of the window in golden colors upon the wall, above the bed, from whence they had just removed the dead girl to lay her out.

A cry from Adam Hawk, brought the whole house into the keeping-room, and there stood Adam—with the apparently dead body of his wife in his arms!

The bed in the next room was hastily prepared by some of the frightened women, and Peggy Hawk was laid upon it.

Another hour found the mother lying on her death-bed, in the bed-room, and the daughter laid out in the keeping-room—while Adam Hawk, stern and harsh to his best beloved ones, while they were living, gave himself up to grief and remorseful tenderness, now that they were dead, or dying.

But, reader, we will leave this gloomy picture, and turn to a brighter and a happier one, upon which the same New Year's sun arose.

CHAPTER II.

MARY VIRGINIA WASHINGTON.

'Tis night;—within a curtained room
Filled to faintness with perfume,
A lady lies at point of doom.
'Tis morn;—a child hath seen the light.
Day of Life.

The night of the Old and the New Year—the night of death at the Grange, was the night of new life at the Mansion. Mary Virginia, the child-like widow of the youthful Joseph Washington, deceased, and the daughter-in-law of the distinguished Judge Washington, was brought to bed of her first and only child. Long had the young creature suffered in silence, rather than disturb the rest of the family domestics, whose old-fashioned regularity had sent them to bed, as usual, at a very early hour; and not until amid pain and terror she had partly lost her self-command, did she pull the bell rope, ringing a peal that presently brought her nurse from the next room, the young lady's dressing-room, where a cot had been placed for her temporary accommodation. This matron was no Mrs. Gamp, but one of those skillful, neat-handed, kind hearted, cheerful and comfortable old ladies, who are not only a great consolation, but a real luxury in illness. The great experience of Mrs. Comford convinced her at a glance that this was no false alarm; that sleep or no sleep, the household would have to be aroused; and tempest or no tempest, Prince William or the overseer would have to saddle Snow-Storm and go for Dr. McWalters.

"I am very sorry to have awakened you, nurse, for *now* I am better—*well* indeed—but just now—you have no idea how extremely ill I was!"

"Haven't I, my dear?" said Mrs. Comford, in a tone of gentle, compassionate irony.

"Excuse my disturbing you, dear Mrs. Comford, and go to bed again. I will not be foolish again. I am well now—No! I am *ill!*"

And so indeed she was.

Mrs. Comford rang the bell with violence to rouse up the servants, and returned to the side of her patient, who was again enjoying a tempo rary respite from her agony.

"Can you not manage by yourself, nurse? It is such a pity to wake them up, poor creatures; they have been at work all day. Say, can you nót manage by yourself?"

"My dear child, yes! I have managed hundreds of cases all alone by my own self, without assistance, and I would undertake yours also, if you were any poor man's wife or daughter—for raly, it is a simple matter enough, and nothing to frighten you—for it is as natrel for people to be born, as it is for them to die, you know, and seldom requires any more assistance from the doctors for the one than for the other—but notions are notions—and gentry think they must have physicians at such times."

"I do not think so, nurse."

"Yes, my dear, but you are Judge Washington's daughter-in-law, and the babe about to come into the world is the only heir, or heiress, of his own line, he will ever have; therefore it is important that everything should go exactly right, and if I should undertake this affair without a doctor, and the baby should happen to be too red in the face, or not red enough, or if it should scream too loud or not loud enough, it would all be laid on the nurse's want of skill. I have heard them talk, my dear young lady, before this—the nurse is the doctor's scape-goat—"

The coming agony of her patient again cut short her speech, and just as this fit was over, a rap at the door was heard, and when it was opened, a gentleman past middle age, of majestic form and benign countenance, dressed in black, appeared within it.

"Mary?" inquired he of Mrs. Comford.

"Yes. She is ill, Judge! You had best at once send for the doctor."

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"Father! dear father!" said the gentle voice from the bed.

"What, my daughter?"

"Come to me, please, sir."

The gentleman advanced to the bedside and bent over her. She raised her arms, placed them around his neck, and said,

"Kiss me, father, and bless me; then I shall not be afraid."

"God bless thee, good, beloved Mary."

"Now go to bed again, dearest father, please, sir."

"Leaving you ill. No, my Mary."

"But I am not ill now, and if I were very, *very* bad, *then* I would send for you to lift up my hands to God—as you have always done through all my trials, when my faith has fainted. Go now, please, sir, go to rest."

Judge Washington went, but it was to dispatch his confidential servant, "Prince William," to the overseer, and having done so, entered his daughter's dressing-room by another door, and set himself down, covering his brow with his hand, to await the issue of her illness. Here the overseer found him, and was sent for the family physician. And here, as the hours went by, from time to time stealthily entered the doctor or the nurse, with bulletins from the sick chamber of the young lady.

Once when life and death seemed struggling desperately for the victory, Judge Washington could no longer sit still and hear the agonizing cries of the sufferer, but rising, passed at once into her chamber and to the side of her bed.

"Mary! my Mary! call on God and be a woman!" he said, taking her hands. His voice and touch possessed a mesmeric power over her excited nerves—she grew calm and strong, and murmured,

"Oh, thank you, father! I feel safe with you in the room."

"I will not leave it again, my Mary. I will be near at hand," and kissing her pallid brow, damp with a cold sweat, he retired from the couch.

In the meantime the storm raged violently and shook the windows.

And the household was in a state of confusion, only produced by such events. In her department the cook was superintending the preparation of a plentiful and luxuriant breakfast, which *she* modestly called "getting a cup of coffee for doctor," which was to be served when all was over above stairs—or—when he had a chance to take it.

In the linen-room Mrs. Washington's dressing maid, a very pretty mulatto girl, was sitting down with her red apron flung over her head, crying bitterly, for this excellent reason: Christmas and New Year is the great praising time among the negroes on the Southern plantations, and the very next night, of all the nights in the year, New Year's night, pretty Coral Pepper, Miss Mary's own waiting-maid, was to be married to Prince William Henry, Judge Washington's body servant, (the reader will please to understand that "Prince" was a name given Mr. Henry by his sponsors in baptism and no titular dignity,) and Miss Mary had promised them a wedding—and now all this was to be deferred—perhaps till next New Year—perhaps forever—who could tell—delays were dangerous—and who shall place their trust in princes?—therefore pretty Coral Pepper, with her red apron thrown over her head, wept in the linen-room, while her mother, Poll Pepper, the housekeeper, bustled from kitchen to pantry, and pantry to kitchen—from the sick chamber to the linen-room, and from thence to the laundry—hurrying and worrying everybody out of their wits and into chaos. At the last mentioned apartment she stumbled upon Coral.

"What are you doing here, you lazy huzzy, when the whole enduring house is in a 'fusion from top to bottom, and your dear young mistess at the pint of death—and young marse little worse?"

Polly was, in fact, about the same age as her master, but from the time she learned to lisp, she had been taught by her parents to call him "Young Marse" in contradistinction to "Ole Marse," his father, who bore the name of Joseph. And the old man died, and his son, in his time, was a father—but he still continued to be Young Marse to the whole plantation, while the new comer was dubbed "Marse Joe;" and now that Judge Washington was in the eyes of the whole State one of its most distinguished men, and now that it had conferred upon him the highest dignities in its gift, and now that his hair was turning white, and he was about to be a grandfather—to the people of his plantation who had grown up and were growing old with him, he was only "Young Marse" *still*.

"What are you doing here? Ain't you ashamed of yourself? Little do you care for your young mistess!"

"Little my young mistess cares for me!" sobbed Coral.

"What do you mean? I'm sure no body can be kinder than Miss Mary Ginny. What in the yeth are you cryin' bout? Who's been sayin' anythin' to you? Ef it wur Miss Mary, I know 'fore hand you 'served it. What's the matter with you? Why don't you speak? Tell me what's the matter of you this minnit!"

"It's—it's—it's—too bad!"

"*What's* too bad? Will the gal speak?"

"It's—it's—it's," sobbed Coral.

"*What?*"

"It's nothin' 'tall, but Miss Mary's rotten, infunnelly corntrairiness!"

"Look here, Coralline, don't let me hear you swear again! That's not the sample I sets you

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No more ain't it the sample your blessed satanic young mistess sets. Who ever heern an oath from the lips of that young saint, or even young marse, as much as *he* has to try him! There, now, tell me what is ailing of you, and talk fast, too, for I'm in a hurry!"

"Well, then—then—then—I say it's nothing but Mary's—"

"Don't swear!"

"I ain't a-gwine to!—*spitefulness!*"

"*What* is?"

"To go and get ill the very night afore—night afore—night afore!"

"Well!"

"Night afore me and Prince was a goin' to be what-you-call-ummed!"

"The saints alive! as if *she* could help it—the satanic angel! Get up, gal! You needn't be in a hurry to borrow trouble by getting married! It 'll come soon 'nough! Get up an' carry some hot water up in your mistess's room. I'd do it myself, but I'm tired, an' 'deed I'm gettin' older an' older every day of my life! Fac', truffe I'm tellin' of you, chile. I am, indeed, though you don't 'pear to think so!"

Coral wiped her eyes and went out to do her mother's bidding.

"Now listen!" called Polly after her. "Arter you've done that, go right trait down in kitchen and grind. Everything down der is turned up side down, and every singly thin' in a 'fusion. Make haste."

The storm of wind, snow and sleet that had been furiously raging all night, had exhausted its power; the clouds had rolled away, the sky had cleared, and the full moon was shining gloriously bright, when the nurse entered the dressing-room into which Judge Washington had then returned, and held before him the new-born babe, saying, respectfully,

"Bless your grand-daughter, sir."

He took the child in his arms, and blessed it; entered the chamber of the youthful mother, kissed her pale brow, and retired with the physician.

It was now near the dawn of day. The room was darkened and silent, and at the head of the bed, in a deep arm-chair, sat Mrs. Comford with the babe on her lap. Nurse and child were both watched by a pair of beautiful, wide-open eyes from the bed.

"Lay her here by my side, and go to bed, nurse," said the gentle voice, whose silvery, clear tones were ever full of benevolence and compassion; "*do* go to bed, nurse."

"And leave you, my dear young lady?—that would never do!"

"But you have not slept all night."

"I am not sleepy, madam."

"But you must be quite wearied out."

"Oh, no, I am quite fresh."

"There is breakfast prepared down stairs for the doctor—go down, and get a cup of coffee."

"I do not need it, indeed, my dear—besides, they will bring it up here to me soon; but you must not talk, my dear, you must go to sleep."

"I do not wish to sleep."

"You do not? You have some uneasiness—what is it? Do not, my dear child, be so unwilling to give a little trouble, which is no trouble at all. You may do yourself harm by it. Tell me where you feel bad, and let me do something for you."

"I do not feel badly—I feel very well—I am enjoying a delicious repose."

"Very well, then, go to sleep, my dear."

"But I cannot."

"Then shut your eyes and lie still."

"Nurse, I cannot sleep, indeed—or even lie still, and know you, at your time of life, sitting there awake and watching. Lay my little daughter—how sweetly that sounds to me, nurse,—lay my little daughter by my side, and do you go and lie down on your cot in my dressing-room—and then I will *try* to sleep; and if I cannot, at least I shall rest delightfully."

Mrs. Comford thought it best to lay the child upon the bed, and prepare to obey her.

"Tell me, now, is there nothing in the world I can do for you, honey, before I go?"

"Nothing, I thank you, nurse."

"Yes, but indeed I do not like to go and leave you so; is there nothing—"

"Well, then, dear Mrs. Comford, *yes*, there is a little thing I want done. Festoon the curtains at the foot of my bed, and draw aside those of my dawn window."

"Your *what*, my dear child?"

"My dawn window, nurse, the bay window at the foot of my bed."

"Excuse me, but what is that for, child?"

"Every morning, nurse, since I first occupied this room, after God called Joseph to Heaven, I have been accustomed to wake early, and, lying here, watch through that large bay window opposite the foot of my bed, the first faint dawn of day on the Plains—to watch it grow lighter and brighter, until the glorious sun himself should arise, and flood the whole earth and sky with glory. Any one would think the prospect from that window a very monotonous and uninteresting one—nothing but level plains and the sky—but as I have lain here I have marked infinite and beautiful varieties. I have seen the day dawn cloudless—a clear sheet of transparent crimson burning red at the horizon, and fading off to the pale blue zenith. I have seen it dawn behind a range of cloud-mountains, whose summits the hidden sun would gild and tint with a thousand brilliant rainbow hues. I have seen it

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dawn upon an overcast and leaden sky, and even then thought the soft stealing of mere light upon darkness inexpressibly beautiful; and I have seen day dawn upon every variety of ground upon the plains—upon the soft, bright, green verdure of spring and early summer, upon the bronzed and burnished grass of autumn, and upon the snow-clad fields of winter. Oh, yes—there is infinite and beautiful variety even in that apparently monotonous scene. Sunrise is a glorious sight! a sublime sight! and excites the highest admiration—but the dawn of day is beautiful and lovely, and touches my heart I love the dawn of day!"

Mary spoke in a low voice, and more to herself than to her attendant, who, however, said,

"But when it gets light the sun, you know, will hurt your eyes, my dear!"

"When it gets light, nurse, if it should hurt them, I will cover my eyes till you come."

Mrs. Bomford, sorely against her will, festooned the bed curtains, drew back the window curtains, and left her patient watching for the dawn.

There was a religious sentiment connected with the habit in her mind. It was immediately after the death of her young husband, that her father-in-law, with thoughtful and tender feeling, had transferred Mary from the apartments that herself and Captain Washington had occupied, to these rooms at the opposite end of the house. The night she was removed was that of the day of her husband's funeral. It was a cold and stormy night, and she had lain awake weeping all night, while the wind sent the rain against the large window opposite the foot of her bed. At length she prayed, and was comforted, and fell asleep, and when she awoke again the rain had ceased, but the window was black with the dense darkness of the hour; but as she lay there, struggling against the temptation of unbelief and despair, and trying, by faith, to follow her loved and lost into the Heaven to which they had gone, and repeating again, with her heart, and not her tongue, "Lord, I believe! help *Thou* mine unbelief!" the dense blackness against the window grew thinner and more transparent, but so faintly so, as scarcely to attract her notice, for she closed her eyes, whose pupils ached at their great dilation in the darkness. In a minute they were rested and opened again, and now it was certainly less dark, and she knew that day was dawning. Perhaps she had really never seen the day dawn before. Perhaps she had always slept in curtained chambers, or with the head of her bed against the light. At all events, it is certain that she had never noticed the dawn of day before—and now she watched it with peculiar and profound interest. As the dark, tempestuous night had associated itself with ideas of death and the grave,—with the darkening of her own soul with clouds of momentary unbelief and despair—so the faint, soft, clear dawn now stealing on the darkness, associated itself with the peace that fell with prayer upon her troubled soul—with the hope that came by faith to her despairing soul—with the day of resurrection breaking upon the night of death—and Mary folded her hands devoutly, and raised her heart to God, while the morning grew brighter on the earth, and faith grew brighter in her spirit. From that time Mary slept at night, but woke at day break, to offer up her morning worship before her dawn window.

And now Mary folded her hands together and prayed in sight of her dawn window. Her heart was swelling with its flood of gratitude and needed to pour itself out in thanksgiving. So Mary gave thanks for her living child, and prayed for wisdom to bring her up aright. While she lay there, she heard—*first*, Mrs. Comford breathing deeply and regularly in the next room, and knew by that that she slept—next, a light pit-patting down the stairs leading from the third story, a soft tread near her chamber-door; and then Mary rose upon her elbow and looked eagerly, and with something of a remorseful tenderness in her gentle face—just as a child's meek voice was heard without to say,

"Mamma—dear mamma, may I come in?"

"Yes, Josey. Come in, darling."

And the door was softly pushed open, as softly closed again, and a little delicate, fair-haired, blue-eyed child, of some six or seven years old, came up quietly to the bed.

This was Mary Washington's adopted child—and this was his short and simple story. Five years before, in Mary's happy childhood, she had gone to Alexandria with her father, Colonel Carey. While staying there at the principal hotel, their attention was one morning attracted to a crowd gathering in the street before the door. Colonel Carey went down to ascertain the cause of the disturbance, and discovered that it was occasioned by a beggar-woman having fallen dead in the street—and by a young babe that had rolled from her arms. Much pity was felt and expressed. The child was carried into the house and put in charge of one of the under house maids, and the Coroner summoned to set upon the dead body of the mother. Every possible investigation was made, but nothing was discovered of the woman, or of any friends or acquaintances she might have had. The woman was finally buried at the expense of the Corporation, and the child destined to the Poor House. Now Mary Carey had wept very much over the sad fate of the pauper mother and the destitute babe, and when she heard it was to be sent to the Poor House, she threw her arms around her father's neck, imploring him to let *her* take it. Her father was surprised—objected to the plan—rea-

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soned with his little girl; but her sympathies were stronger than his logic, and finally, as he could not refuse his motherless daughter anything that was not wrong, he gave his consent to her adoption of the orphan; and Mary immediately took possession of her prize—made herself very happy in providing comfortably for its immediate wants, and finally carried it with her to her country home. She called him Joseph, after her youthful idolatry and betrothed Joseph Washington; and from that hour the infant shared Mary's home and bed until she was married, and then the infant of four years old was taken to Prospect Hall.

Neither Captain Washington nor Judge Washington had raised the slightest objection to "Mary's pet child." On the contrary, both were ever happy in the opportunity of proving their affection for her in any extraordinary manner. Captain Washington, in the tenderness and generosity of his noble heart, had volunteered a promise to his bride, that as soon as the boy should be free from her leading strings, he would charge himself with his education, and final establishment in life. Already in his young enthusiasm and impetuosity, he had fixed upon his protege's future profession—the captain's own of course—and announced that as soon as the boy should attain the proper age, he should enter as a cadet the military academy of West Point. And this was promulgated by Coral through the household.

One among their number, however, shook his head and objected—that was Bruin the Deformed, a nondescript in person and in office—the son of some former long deceased overseer, who had grown up an old man about the plantation—now haunting his birth-place, Blackthorn Grange—now hovering about the Mansion House. Never was a great and beautiful soul imprisoned in so dwarfed and deformed a body. Little opportunity of mental or moral improvement had Bruin found—for few books came in his way, and few people talked with him; and out of Judge Washington's family little kindness was shown him; nevertheless, his brain had thriven upon the very crumbs of knowledge that fell from the rich man's intellectual table, and his heart had fed upon the few sympathetic words and beneficial acts that blessed him.

But more of *that* anon. It was Bruin the Dwarf, then, that objected to the proposed destination of the child.

"No," said Bruin, whose favorite study was phrenology. "No," he repeated, taking the child upon his knee, and running his long blackish fingers through the infant's sunny hair, and feeling his "bumps;" "no! that would never do! his whole physical, intellectual and moral organization, would be a living epigram upon his profession! the infant is too greatly—too wonderfully endowed for that!"

"*Indeed*, then!" exclaimed the scandalized Coral, "indeed, then! pray is not Captain Washington a soldier!"

"Captain Washington," said the dwarf, "got his commission 'in times that tried men's souls,' as they say—and he has reflected honor upon his profession. Captain Washington is the hero of the present, worthy almost even of his illustrious name-sake and relative; but this infant, mark you, is the man of the future! God;" said the dwarf, still running his fingers through the golden curls, turning them back from the snowy brow, and gazing into the clear, deep blue eyes—"God, what a physiognomy—what a phrenology is his!"

"What a *what*?" asked Coral.

But the dwarf went on as if talking to himself. "What intellectual development! what immense Comparison and Causality! what enormous Ideality and Sublimity! what towering Reverence, larger even than our Mary's! And Conscientiousness! My God, this boy would go to perdition for the right, rather than purchase Heaven by the wrong, could such an alternative possibly offer! What social affection, too! What love of women and of children! What Adhesiveness. But he has not Self-Esteem enough; no—nor Firmness—nor Combativeness nor Destructiveness enough! Oh, my child, anointed for sorrow!" continued the dwarf, gazing sadly in the eyes of the wondering boy. "The service of God and humanity! That is your mission, my boy!

"No—he will never make a soldier! Too much Benevolence—too much Reverence—too little Combativeness and Destructiveness—child anointed for Suffering! Not much attacktive or even defensive courage, but much passive courage, endurance, fortitude, or whatever else the martyr spirit be called. No—never will he make a soldier, other than a 'soldier of the cross!'" decided the dwarf.

Josey wept bitterly at first being separated from his "little mother's" sleeping apartment, and Mary, to console him, had selected a beautiful little room in the third story, and given it to him as his own. She had furnished and adorned this room with a view to its effect upon the infant's mind and heart. He had a small French bedstead, of rose-wood, a little chest of drawers, a little rocking-chair, and several other little chairs, a little wash-stand and table; and lastly, a little book-case, stored with children's books. Of this last he was permitted to keep the key.—Very few of the books could he tell, except by the engravings, but he could at any time select the book he wished, and little mother would read it to him. She adorned the walls with pictures of the Holy Family—the Child in the Temple and others, all of a religious or an affectionate nature. And she told him Bible stories about them. The Holy Family, representing a

central group of Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus, visited by Eli, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist, as a boy of two years old, standing, was the child's especial delight.

"Little mother," he said, one day, "*you* are like Mary; grandpa (as he called Judge Washington,) is like Joseph; and I—"

"Hush! hush! my darling! that is very irreverent—you must try all your life to follow in the footsteps of the Divine Infant."

"*I* am like the little boy, standing there, who came before Him, but was preferred after Him, and was not worthy to tie His shoes, but who loved Him better than himself. Little mother, am I like *Him?*"

"No, little boy, but you may, by His grace, become like Him."

After the widowhood of Mary Washington, she had found her best solace in the education and care of this lovely boy. He was still left in his little room in the third story, but much of her time, not passed in other labors of love, was spent by Mary, there. And now his education progressed rapidly. He had learned to read all the books in his little book-case, and she had sent to Alexandria for more. Among these came "The Exiles of Siberia," and "Paul and Virginia." They read the Exiles first, and by the story of Elizabeth's heroism and devotion, the heart and imagination of the boy was fired, and he said, fervently—

"Oh, mamma! how my heart does beat! I want to do something like that for you!"

"We can prove our love by *bearing*, as well as by *doing*, little boy, and you will have the opportunity!"

"Oh, mamma!—*when?*"

"Soon, perhaps, Josey."

But that was nothing to his excitement when reading Paul and Virginia. After it was done, and all his sympathetic tears were shed, he fell into profound thought—thought was ever born of feeling with him—and at last he said—

"If I had been Paul I would not have died and left my poor mother. I think it was selfish in Paul to follow Virginia to Heaven, and leave her mother and his own poor mother on earth. I would not have died if I had been Paul."

"My love, it often requires more courage to live than to die."

"I know it, sweet mother, for who would not like to go to Heaven? Yes, I know it, sweet mother, for you would rather go to Heaven with them that's gone than stay here, if it wa'n't for grandpa and Josey. Mamma!"

"Well, Josey?"

"What is it makes girls and women bear everything so much better than boys and men?"

"What makes you think they *do*, Josey?"

"Why in all the books I read, I find that little gir's bear things best. There was Elizabeth. now, in the Exiles, what hardships she bore, and then there was Virginia—see with what fortitude she bore the parting that Paul sank under—and here is you, little mother—when almost every one you loved died, and Grandpa Carey died of grief, you kept alive—and you said, just now, 'it takes more courage to live than to die.'"

"*Sometimes*, my love; and I should have said—not courage, but—fortitude. Men and boys have more courage than women and girls, but women have more patience than men."

"I think I love girls best, little mother; besides, all the angels are girls."

"Oh! no, love! *none* of them—there is no such thing mentioned in the Bible."

The child's next observation was very childlike, but neither sublime nor pathetic.

"Well, then, little mother," he said, pointing to the picture of the Annunciation, Gabriel wears long frocks, anyhow, and long hair, too—now if he is a boy, why don't he wear trousers?"

The question involving the problem that confounds the philosophers of the nineteenth century, was too profound for the simple wisdom of Mary, who could only reply—

"Oh, dear, love, do not talk so of the Holy Angels—they are neither male nor female, but far above either—Angels of the Lord!"

Awed by her tone, the child raised his eyes in reverence and fear once more to the picture, and became silent and thoughtful.

Paul and Virginia became his favorite book, however, though he never read the catastrophe without shedding tears; and his admiration of the beauty and goodness, and his compassion for the tragic end of the lovely children was used by Mary to impress upon his infant mind this truth:—that when goodness does not meet its deserts—happiness in this world—it is its surest guarantee of its receiving it from the hands of God, in Heaven. But most of all the boy loved the ideal Virginia. She evidently took a rank among his patron saints, and guardian angels, rather than with the heroes and heroines of his other childish books.

His birth-day was unknown—but his little mother had always observed the anniversary of her adoption of him, as a birth-day. This was the first of July, and upon this day she always made a little feast for him; and gave a feast to all the little colored children. The first birth-day they had both passed at Prospect Hall, was so very sad a one—so soon after her grievous bereavement—that Mary could not make a feast; but she asked Josey what she should give him.

"Oh, mamma! give me a little sister named Virginia!"

Mary smiled very sadly at this childish request, but willing to gratify her little boy to the utmost of her ability, she sent to Alexandria and

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purchased a beautiful oil painting of the Infancy of Paul and Virginia that she remembered to have seen there. This, in default of the real Virginia, delighted Josey very much. It was hung up in his room.

Convinced of the great influence of early reading, and even early pictures, upon the character of a child, she sought by such books and prints as those of Paul and Virginia, The Exiles of Siberia, as well as by her own precept and example, to foster every gentle household affection, every high heroic virtue. By stories of the Saviour, she cultivated his profound religious sentiments. By all that is beautiful, lovely, or grand and awful in nature—by flowers, sunrise, mountains, storms—by all the best emotions of his own heart, and the brightest inspirations of his own mind, she sought to raise his soul to God.

Mary was passionately fond of children, as I said, and she had found sweet comfort in educating her lovely adopted child. But when she found that God had blessed her with the prospect of a child of her own, her joy was profound—her joy was profound, but alloyed by a sorrow and a tender remorse—a new sorrow for the loss of her husband, and a remorse at the conciousness that now a dearer child would supersede her orphan boy in her best affections. This made Mary resolve that if her feelings changed, her actions should not. This made her redouble her tenderness to the child. This made her one day take him to her bosom and shed tears of compassion over him—tears that rained from her eyes when the child too wept, and implored little mother to tell him what was the matter. There was one beautiful thing between this mother and child—it was their confidence in and faith towards each other—so when Josey wiping away her fast falling tears with his little apron, and kissing her weeping, begged her to tell him what was the matter—she pressed him closer to her bosom, and said,

"Josey, mamma loves you very dearly—she can never love you any less; but listen to me now—God is going to send me another child, a little baby."

"Oh, mamma! Indeed! I am so glad that our Father is going to send us a little child! Will it be a little girl that will be my little playmate and sister that I can call Virginia, and love and wait on?"

"Perhaps so, love, and perhaps a little boy. Mamma don't know."

"Didn't our Father send you word?"

"No, Josey."

"But what made you cry, then, little mother?"

"Because little mother fears that she shall love the little stranger more than she loves her [illegible], and that her Josey will be unhappy!"

"*Why*, mamma?" inquired the child, with his beautiful eyes raised to her face dilated with wonder. "*Why*, mother?" he asked again, and Mary was again puzzled by the searching question of a simple child, and in acknowledging in him the presence of a nature even purer, more unselfish than her own, felt ashamed of her former morbid anxiety. The child, when his questions were not soon answered from without, inquired within himself—and now after falling into a short but deep reverie, he spoke up:

"Now I know, little mother, though I don't know how to tell you. But one thing I'll tell you—two things I'll tell you. If you love the baby that God sends you straight from Himself better than me, it will be because it will be a gooder child than I am, and then I will be like the little John in the Holy Family. I will stand by your knee and look at the baby, and love it until I get good enough to tie its shoes."

This last conversation had occurred only a few days before her accouchement.

It was this child, then, who now advanced to the bedside, and by his mother's permission climbed upon the bed.

"What brings my little Josey out of his warm nest so early this cold morning?" inquired Mary, stroking his fair curls.

"Oh, mamma, I have been awake ever so long, I heard Coral and Pepper and all of them running about in the night, and it woke me up, and I heard Pepper come into the linen-room and say to somebody that you were sick, and I got up and come down and stood by the door—and Coral came by with some hot water, and she set it down and took me up and carried me up stairs again, and told me if I made a noise or got up again before morning it might kill mamma, who was very ill. And then I laid in the bed and cried all night and prayer to God not to take my mamma to Heaven without me, too—and then I heard some one come in the linen-room and tumble about the things and laugh, and then I knew you were well again—because no one could laugh while you were sick—and so I laid and waited till I saw day dawning, and then I got up and came down, because I knew that mamma would let me in."

Mary passed her arms around the child, drew him down to her bosom, and kissed him. Then rising upon her elbow, she reached a shawl from the back of the chair, and drew it around him, bidding him sit there quietly. Lastly, she lifted her baby from the other side, and laid it before him, saying,

"Look, my little Josey!—God has sent Virginia at last!"

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed the child, fervently clasping his little hands together, and gazing at the babe with mingled awe, admiration and tenderness; "oh, mamma! she is so little!"

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"And so innocent, and tender, and helpless, Josey!"

"I love her so dearly, mamma!"

"Dear boy! Kiss me, Josey!"

He kissed his "little mother" again and again, and then, reverting to the baby, said,

"Is her name really Virginia, mamma?"

"Yes, Josey, Mary Virginia—that was *my* mother's name—it's *mine*, and I will also place *her* under the protection of the Virgin Mary."

"Oh, what a darling little Virginia! but she is *so* little, mamma!"

"She will every day grow bigger."

"And be as pretty, mamma?"

"I hope so, and as innocent. But now the sun is getting so bright, and I promised to call up Mrs. Comford; pull the bell-rope for mamma, Josey."

And the child having done so, soon after, Mrs. Comford entered the room. The good woman gently reproved her charge for worrying herself so,—sent little Josey off to Coral to be dressed, —put the baby in the cradle—made Mary lie down again to sleep—drew the curtains of the "dawn window," and having set the chamber in perfect order, replenished the fire, and left the room to prepare a light breakfast for her patient.

CHAPTER III.

NEW YEAR'S MORNING AT PROSPECT HALL.

There's not a maid nor wearied man of mine,
But now this day shall smile through all their care,
And revel it in transport and rude harmony.

Congreve.

Very grand and beautiful, though very simple, was the "prospect" from the front vestibule of the hall, which commanded a view of the smoothly descending sweep of the snow-clad hill and plains, stretching many miles to Chesapeake Bay, which formed the boundary of the Eastern horizon, and whose dark waters were now a-blaze with the splendor of the risen sun.

Here upon this morning in the vestibule, smiling, stood Judge Washington, and from all parts of the plantation, coming up the hill in their gay holiday attire were seen his people—men, women and children coming to wish their venerated master and his family a Happy Year, and to receive from his hands some appropriate token of regard. "Happy New Year! Judge!" "Happy New Year! marster!" "Happy New Year, sir! and many returns of 'em!" sounded now from all sides, as the people came up the marble stairs and crowded around their master.

But she, the idolized young mistress, who had stood by his side a week before, on Christmas day, was absent; and as their inquiring glances went about, and sly smiles were exchanged—for they judged the cause of her absence by the happy expression of their master's countenance—Judge Washington said—

"Wish me joy, my people, upon another happy occasion—the birth of my grand-daughter Virginia!"

And then a shout went up into the air! And the Judge was cheered! And the young mother! And the child!

"But where is Adam Hawk?" inquired the old gentleman.

"We have not seen him this morning, sir!"

"He was disturbed last night. He has probably over-slept himself this morning. You, Prince, must do his office upon this occasion," said Judge Washington, placing a heavy purse in the hand of his confidential attendant. "Distribute this among your fellow servants, and God bless you all!—and stay! Where is Bruin, my good Bruin? I do not see him!"

"We have not seen him at the house this morning, sir—'haps he's at Blackthorn's."

"Prince, send some one to bid him come to me—I have Spurzheim's Philosophy for him."

"Yes, sir! yes! 'mediately, sir! Dull! do you come here! Run now as fast as you can go to Blackthorn's, and 'form Bruin that young marse has spurs and a hoss for him," said this deputy, in a low voice, to his messenger.

"Now go, my people, and enjoy your holiday, and God be with you!" said the Judge, turning towards the house.

"God bless Judge Washington, and all his name!" shouted the dispersing crowd.

Judge Washington turned to see, bowing low before him, hat in hand, the tall, gaunt figure of Adam Hawk, with his gray locks streaming on the wind.

"Happy New Year, my good friend! I was just inquiring for you, missing you from this, my patriarchal gathering of the clans, and supposing you to be sleeping off your fatigue. I hope you have not shortened your morning's rest upon my account; for you look rather weary. Cover, my good Adam! cover, this crisp morning! Your gray hair, like mine, looks not so well romping with the wind, as Mary's chesnut locks might look. And now I see you again—indeed, Adam, you look haggard. You have lost too much sleep. Come in and take a glass of egg-nog to Mary's health, and then go home and go to bed," said the Judge.

But Adam Hawk bowed again more lowly than before, and said,

"You see before you a stricken man this morning, Judge! Verily the hand of God has fallen heavily upon me!"

"Adam, old friend, you speak solemnly. You alarm me! I trust no evil has befallen you since last night."

"My child, sir, who was lost, is found a-

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but was found in the snow, and her corse lies now at my house!"

"Adam! My heaven! Adam! what do you tell me!"

"Her mother, sir, overwhelmed by the shock, is dying."

Judge Washington gazed silently at the speaker with a countenance stolid with surprise and compassion.

"That, sir, is the excuse I offer for not being early at my duty this morning."

"Adam Hawk, I pity you from the very bottom of my heart. Adam, I am deeply wounded by your griefs."

"There is no use in that, sir."

"Good friend! command me. What can I do for you?"

"Nothing, Judge, since there is no withstanding the Almighty."

"Let there be no rebelling then, Adam, against the Almighty; no doubting the All-wise; no murmuring against the All-merciful—He wounds to heal. I, too, Adam, as you know—I and mine have been smitten to the dust, but we have been raised again. Earth has remedies for almost every other affliction—God only for those that come by death." Adam bowed lowly and remained silent. Judge Washington continued, "Resign yourself, Adam; not as a prisoner to the sentence of a Judge, but as a little child to the discipline of his father."

Again Adam inclined his head, and saying,

"Permit me now to return to the bedside of my dying wife," turned to depart.

"God be with you, Adam. Call on me for any service you may need. I will be down to see you in a few hours."

Adam Hawk departed, and Judge Washington re-entered the mansion, and proceeded to the bed-chamber of his daughter-in-law.

Mary was sitting up in bed, supported by downy white pillows, and her sweet, wan face looked even fairer, for the soft shade of the delicate lace cap—and beautiful, far more beautiful, for the heavenly love and still joy beaming from her countenance—upon the babe sleeping before her. As her "father," as she called him, entered the room, Mary held out one hand to him, and as he came to the side of the bed, she murmured in low tones, full of deep emotion,

"I am *so* happy! Oh, my beloved, my venerated father! my second *good*, father bless *thy* child and *her* child!"

"I *do* bless thee every day I live, my Mary—and again I bless thee. May God be ever in thy heart, and love and truth be ever on thy lips as now, my Mary!"

"I am *so* happy! I am *so* grateful! My heart fills to breaking with its wish, its *need* to do God some good service! I am so happy! I am so grateful! Oh, my father! what shall I render unto the Lord for all His mercies?"

"'The cattle upon a thousand hills are the Lord's! The whole earth, and the fullness thereof are His. Yea, the heavens and the majesty thereof are the Lord's," said Judge Washington, contemplating the lovely young mother with a sweet solemnity of brow.

"What, then, shall I render unto the Lord for all His mercies—since all that is His of right."

The patriarch bent over her, and with a countenance and in tones full of blessing, said,

"My daughter! 'thou shalt LOVE the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy strength.' That which we frail creatures—created by a breath, and by a breath destroyed—that which *we* beg for in every act and word and thought—the Supreme Sovereign of the Universe Himself in His lone Omnipotence pleads for—LOVE. 'My son, my daughter, give me thy HEART!'" Mary! above and before all things raise thy soul and the soul of thy child in LOVE to the Universal Father, and all good else will follow of itself."

"Oh! I do, I do and shall! and it *has* made me happy, and *will* make me so, but—a barren love! Oh, father! when my soul burns to *do* something!"

"'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' there is large DOING in that, my Mary!"

They were interrupted by a knock at the door. Judge Washington stepped to the door and opened it partly. Bruin, the Deformed, appeared and said a few words in a low voice. "Certainly—remain below stairs a few minutes, Bruin," were the only words of the colloquy that Mary heard—and these were spoken by the Judge, who, closing the door returned, and seating himself by the bed, said,

"Mary, my dear daughter, I have something to tell you—something that, in your present state, perhaps, you should not hear—but which duty nevertheless constrains me to reveal. I will rely upon your self-command and fortitude as well as upon your strength of nerve."

"Well, father! Margaret! It is about Margaret!" said Mary, in a low voice, but growing very pale.

"My dear Mary—remember yourself now—be calm."

"I am, I am, father! But—Margaret!"

"Has passed away from earth."

Mary sank backwards upon her pillow, pressed both open hands to her brow, remained perfectly still for a little while, and then uncovering her face, said,

"The circumstances, father!"

"She returned home last night, died in her mother's arms—died in the hope of a blessed immortality, and blessing with her last breath you and your child, my Mary!"

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"Father! My nurse—her mother! How is it with her?"

"Mary, you knew her state!"

"Yes—yes!"

"The slight tenure by which she held her life?"

"Well—well?"

"She blessed her dying child—received her last breath, and—"

"*She, too, died!*" said Mary, convulsively clasping her hands, and then with an effort controlling herself, while she repeated, "She, too, died!"

"No, my Mary, she lives yet, but her life is despaired of."

"Ah, my dear nurse! My tender friend!"

"I have a message from her for you, Mary!"

"Tell it to me, father! the message of the dying—"

"Listen then, Mary; Margaret left a babe of four weeks old!"

"A babe! Oh, poor, poor things! Oh, poor, poor things! Mother and babe! How it must have tortured the soul of Margaret to leave her babe behind! And oh, the poor, poor, helpless, most destitute innocent!" said Mary, with the tears bathing her face. Tears—such tears are not dangerous, and so they did not alarm Judge Washington or stay his speech.

"It is in behalf of this destitute babe that the dying mother sends you this message—she implores that for the sake of all her tender care of *you* in your infancy—for the sake of the dead Margaret, and for the sake of God—you will care for the orphan babe who is cast off by her grandfather—and see to its being put in a place of safe nurture. And, my Mary, it is because the poor woman cannot die peacefully without a promise brought to her from your own lips that I have ventured to risk disturbing you."

"Thank you, dear father! Wise and good father, thank you for telling me!"

"Bruin waits to take your answer back, my Mary!"

"Let him hasten and tell my dear nurse that I take her Margaret's baby—my sister's baby to my own bosom, and think that God has given me twins! And let him tell her that I come myself to assure her of it with my own lips!"

The Judge left the room, and soon returned, saying,

"I did your bidding, Mary, in regard to the first part of your message, but for the last, my love, it is impossible, you know; you cannot go!"

"Ah, father! do not you say so. You have faith and courage! You know that God will protect me if I rely upon Him while venturing anything for the sake of good."

"My dear Mary, my love, my darling, consider. You would risk your life, unnecessarily; that would be rash and presumptuous."

"Ah, no, father! not to give peace to my dying friend, would be unnecessary, rash or presumptuous."

"But you would run a fearful risk, my dear Mary."

"Ah, father! is not that what nurse would call a 'notion'—that tender fear of yours; see, father, how strong and well I am, for all my ephemeral look—and see how much I have already gone through, which, thanks to God and to your sustaining aid, has not impaired my bodily health."

"That you know of, my love; but, Mary! this exposure at such a time; ah, my child! you must not think of it! you must give it up. I myself will go and see poor Mrs. Hawk, and deliver, literally, any message you send, and promise anything you wish in your name," said the Judge, with affectionate earnestness and gravity.

Mary raised her pleading eyes to his, and placed her delicate hands together, and said, in an imploring voice,

"Father! dear father! hinder me not! If you forbid me, I will not go—but, oh! I shall lie here with such an aching heart, to know my nurse mother dying, and so near me, and I not with her! and afterwards to know her dead, and the opportunity of doing her this good service, taken from my power. Father! dear father! oh! let me go!"

"Mary, my own dear heart's child! if it were not for fear of risking your health, I should not oppose your wishes; *forbid* you—*hinder* you, Mary, I do not—I never did or shall arrogate to myself any control over your free action, my child!"

"But, father, I will not—indeed I could not bring myself to—do anything against your wishes—but I want you, in this instance, to think as I do."

"Be a woman like thou, dear child?"

"Father! just consider—it *is* all a 'notion,' this about the danger. Think how many women I have read of in history, who in 'troublous times' frequently endured hunger, cold, fatiguing journies, all at once! delicate women, too—and yet they never perished. Now, father, the sun has come out warm, and it is thawing out of doors; and the distance is short, and I can go in the close carriage, and be well wrapped up in shawls and furs, and my eider-down quilt. There will be no danger if care is taken, in my going—but if I stay here—oh, father! I am afraid that like a very bad child, I shall cry myself ill."

Much more was said on both sides with which I will not weary the reader, as it was but a variation of the same thing. And finally Mary prevailed, and at high noon found herself well wrapped up—with her nurse and her baby also, in the close carriage, and on her way to Blackthorns.

It was but a ten minutes' drive, and Mary was soon at the bedside of the dying woman, while

ne nurse and babe remained in the outer room.

"You good child! you angel! So you have come! But, oh! Mary, my darling, what have you risked?"

"Nothing, dear, good nurse—nothing at all! I do not feel tired from this little, very comfortable ride!"

"God love my darling!" faintly gasped the sufferer; "God bless the good girl!"

"Send for Maggie's baby, and let me see it, dear nurse. Mine is in the other room—that shall be brought also, and you shall see it."

"Quickly, then, Mary, my child; you *are* my child—ain't you, Mary?"

"Always, ever, dearest, earliest friend!"

"Send for your baby, my dear, that I may bless her before I die."

Mary made a sign to Bruin, who left the room for a few minutes during which Mrs. Comford entered with the babe. She was soon followed by Bruin himself, bringing in the dead Maggy's infant, which had become his charge for the time being.

Both little ones were brought to the bed.

"Lay Margaret's baby in my lap, Bruin," said Mary.

And he did so.

"Raise me up, and place my Mary's infant before me, neighbors," requested Peggy—and her wish was complied with. "What is her name, my child?" asked the dying woman.

"Mary Virginia—I have given her for her patron saint, the spotless Virgin."

The dying woman looked at Mary Washington with a profound but undefinable earnestness, and joining her feeble hands together, raised her eyes to Heaven, and in simple but fervent words invoked the blessing of God and the protection of the Virgin upon the children; then she motioned them to take her away, and sank back exhausted upon her pillow.

Mary waited a few moments, and then gently inquired, "What is the name of this my younger—I mean my second twin—nurse?"

"I had not thought of her name before—but—she is of humble birth—she will be poor—maybe beautiful; she will associate with those of higher rank than herself; a lot full of trial and temptation, from which even your goodness may not be able to defend her; therefore I will give her for a guardian spirit—her who knows the mazy and treacherous road from having lost her way therein—her who was tempted, fallen, repentant, and redeemed by LOVE—St. Mary Magdalene." She paused again, exhausted, and the tears were streaming from Mary Washington's face, obstructing her reply—that at length amid sobs came forth—

"*Your* Maggy, my foster sister, did not so; I have perfect faith in her purity—so has my honored father.

"Thank you! bless you! I knew it! *I* never had a doubt of my child—never! It was not *that* which made me speak as I did—ah, no! with my cold, dying breath, could I breathe a cloud upon my dead child's spotless name—ah, no! it was not that—it was—but my time is so short! Mary!"

"My dear nurse!"

"Did you see Father Lucas, as you came in?"

"Yes, nurse."

"He was sent for to receive my last confession, and to give me extreme unction. Mary!"

"My dear friend!"

"I have another request to make of you."

"Make it, dear nurse!"

"Let the two children be christened now, by my bedside."

"Yes, indeed, dear friend, it shall be done—immediately, if you like."

"Yes, immediately, for my time is very short, and you, my own darling, should be at home and in bed."

"Bruin, please ask Father Lucas to come in," said Mary.

The dwarf departed to do her bidding.

"And *another* request I have to make, dear Mary—so many favors have I to ask of my child."

"So many *rights*, dear nurse, that are gratefully acknowledged—what is it, then, nurse?"

"Stand sponsor for Magdalene."

"Yes, indeed, I will, very gladly, nurse,—will *you* also stand sponsor for Virginia?"

"Ah, my Mary! but I die!"

"Will you be less powerful to protect her in heaven than on earth?"

"No, no."

"Then let it be so, kind nurse."

"It shall."

Father Lucas now entered the room, and by the bedside of the dying woman, administered the rites of Christian baptism to the infant foster sisters:—

Mary Virginia, and
Mary Magdalene.

When this was over, the expiring woman took the infants successively in her arms, and earnestly invoked for them the blessing of God, and the guardianship of saints and angels. Then Mary received them both together upon her lap, and folding her arms around them, pressed them to her bosom—vowing to love both equally as much as she could, and to cherish both alike as long as she and they should live. Then the dying nurse bid Mary a tender farewell, blessed her and dismissed her, and was left alone with the priest, to receive the last services and consolations of her church.

As she passed through the outer room, Mary Washington, pausing, gave a last look of love and adieu to Margaret, in her coffin, severed one

long, glossy, black ringlet from her head, pressed one final kiss upon the cold brow, and replacing the white covering of her face, went her way.

"Thank God!" said Mary, "oh, thank God! that I was permitted to come to her."

In fifteen minutes more, wearied out by all she had gone through, Mary Washington was reposing on her own luxurious couch.

That day the soul of Peggy Hawk returned to God.

It was a strange and wilful sprite
As ever frighted human sight.

The Changeling—SHREVE.

"The glorified saints in Heaven! the saints alive! What an imp! It looks like a little devil! Look at its eyes, will you! Angels alive! did ever any one see such eyes? Ef it don't scare me! 'spose it was to talk! 'Deed, I b'lieve its gwine to! 'spose it was to open its mouth and speak! shouldn't I drap it an' run! Here, mammy! take the scare-crow afore I let it drap!"

"Wish you would! You let it drap now! and see what you'll get! You take the chile right straight out'n the draf', an' up in Miss Mary's room, as you wer' bidden."

"Deed, mammy, I 'fraid of it! Look at its great hollow eyes! It's gwine to say somethin'! 'Deed, ef it talks, I shall drap it and run!"

"Look here, gal! take chile right up-stairs!—Foolishness!"

"Spose I shall have to nuss the witchified little thing! Wouldn't sleep with it for the best goolden guinea that ever was fotch over from Englan'!"

"Lord a marcy! is the creetur gwine to stand there all day yopping her mouf? 'Clare to man, ef you don't start—it'll be the wus for you!"

"I'm gwine—I'm gwine now! But mind, mammy, ef you hear anything fall, and anybody—you may know what it is!"

"Yes, you do! It'll be good for you, that's all I can say!"

This colloquy took place at the foot of the great staircase, between the mischievous Coral and her mother, the morning after the funeral, when the infant Magdalene was brought by Bruin to Prospect Hill, and placed in the arms of the frightened maid to be carried up to her mistress.

Mary Washington was in her own chamber. I must describe this chamber, as it was the very sanctuary of the mother. It was a large, square front chamber, upon the second floor, and fronting the East. It was lighted by one large East bay window,—her dawn window. Opposite, against the West wall, sat the head of Mary's rosewood bedstead, under a canopy; on the right of this, was a door leading into the passage way; on the left, a door leading into the dressing-room—now the nursery. On the South, were two windows, at which the sun shone in nearly all the whole day; between the windows, stood a rosewood bureau and dressing-glass. On the North was the fire-place, surmounted by a white marble chimney-piece. The canopy of the bedstead, the curtains of the windows, the coverings of the chairs, lounges, and foot-cushions, were all of light blue damask.

The walls of the chamber were white. The carpet was of a white ground, with running blue flowers. There were books, pictures, statuettes, and musical instruments—all, not costly, but beautiful. And there were many other things besides—everything that goes to make any one particular room in a house seem like the very heart of home.

Mary Washington sat in a large, blue-covered easy chair by the fire. Her delicate form wrapped in a warm dressing-gown of fine white flannel, wadded and lined with white silk; her soft brown hair was parted smoothly above her brow, and the gossamer borders of a thread lace cap dropped faint shadows upon shining hair and snowy cheek. On one side of the youthful mother sat the cradle in which reposed the infant Virginia, covered with a blue silk quilt of eider down; on the other side, upon a cushion, between her chair and the corner of the fire-place, sat Josey with his book. Mary had stopped to listen for some one who was coming up the stairs, when the door opened, and Coral entered, bearing little Magdalene in her arms. She crossed the room, bringing the child gingerly, and stooping, held it before Mrs. Washington, saying,

"Here it is, Miss Mary—the little Jack-my-lantern!"

"Lay her on my lap, Coral. I have just laid little Virginia down to sleep, and am ready for Magdalene."

"Don't take the thing, Miss Mary, dear! it do look so fierce and wenomous, with its great eyes and its lantern jaws!"

"She is only famished, Coral. Give her to me!"

"Oh, don't put the little wampire to your bosom, Miss Mary; 'deed it'll bite you!"

"*Coral!*" said Mrs. Washington, in a tone of grave, though gentle rebuke.

The girl immediately placed the babe in the lady's arms, who, receiving it, said,

"You must not take a dislike to this poor babe, Coral."

"Lord save it, Miss Mary, I don't hate it more an I do lizzards, but I'm fear'd of it, you know. It is such a queer little human, an' it do look so knowin' an' wicked—but I 'spose the Lord made

it—yes, I do 'spose He really *did*, just as He made the scorapins, (scorpions) for some good an' wise purpose, as they say! though it ain't safe to handle of 'em. Miss Mary, 'xcuse me this once, but 'deed you better let me take the little reptyle down stairs, and feed it with gruel!"

"Coral, you pain me by speaking so of the poor starved baby."

This was always Mrs. Washington's gravest rebuke. "You *pain* me!" and it always had its effect.

"Dear Miss Mary, don't mind *me!* 'Deed, I haven't the leastest mislike to the baby—it's all put on for fun. You know mammy says I'm a big devil, any how! and the baby is such a funny, scrawny, savage looking little thing!"

"You may go now, Coral," said her mistress, and "Pretty Coral," "Coral Red," went.

"Will you love this sister also, Josey?"

"I will *try*, if you like me to, little mother; but it will be very hard, for it is a very ugly sister!"

"Oh, Josey!"

"I will love Virginia, mamma, as much as ever you please. Virginia is so white, and soft, and pretty, and good!"

"But won't you try to love poor Magdalene?"

"I *said* I would *try*, mamma; but it is such an ugly sister—so thin, and black-looking—just like a little young gosling before the feathers are on."

"Josey! she is like that poor little naked, unfeathered bird, which the storm beat from its nest, and which you found under the tree—which gasped and died in your little hands."

"Yes, mamma, I was sorry for the birdling, because you said, if the storm had not beaten it from its nest, it would have become a beautiful song-bird, that would have soared and sung through all the sunny air."

"Little boy! Magdalene is like that bird—storm-beaten from her nest—and if we do not warm, and feed, and cherish her, she, too, will die."

"Yes, mamma," said the little caveller, thumbing his book—"but then, again, she has got such—such—such what-you-call-em eyes!"

"Such fierce, eager eyes, you mean, Josey;—so she has, for a baby, but then that is because she is famished. Her eyes are fierce because her stomach is famished. Let us nurse and love her, and we shall see how soft her eyes will beam, and how round and fair her face will grow, and how pretty, and good, and lovely she will be!—And now listen, little boy, I have something to tell you which I want you to remember—are you listening?"

"Yes, indeed, little mother."

"Well, then, it is this:—when you get to be a man, and see men,—poor, ill-used men, perhaps with fierce passions—do not hate them, and wish to take vengeance on them—but—think that something in their natures has been *starved*—think that where passions are fierce, the soul has been famished—do you understand me, Josey?"

"Yes, mamma! yes, mamma! better than you think I do! I feel it *here*, and I know it *here*, but I don't know how to tell you any more," said the boy, placing his hands upon his heart and his head, and raising his dilating blue eyes to *her* eyes, with one of those profoundly solemn looks that often moved the mirth of the merry Coral, and excited the admiration of Bruin to a fever height.

The orphan babe was certainly unpopular at the hall. Mrs. Comford entered with her charge's dinner just at this point of the conversation, and finding Mary actually engaged in nursing the child, set herself to expostulate seriously against the measure.

"You cannot stand it, ma'am! It will certainly break down your health."

"Ah, no, good Mrs. Comford!—you know it will not! More delicate women than myself have nursed twins before now."

"Ah, dear lady, but this strange child!—such a thing was never heard of!"

"Oh, yes, good nurse!—it has been heard of, and done—Margaret's mother divided her cradle and her milk with *me*, and I will do so for her child!"

"But, dear lady, it is enough to take the infant in the house and care for it, without putting it to your own bosom."

"So did not Margaret's mother think when she took me to *her* bosom—so do not I think by her child."

"But, dear lady, you are so fragile!"

"Good nurse, all who *look* fragile are not so—because I am very small and slight, and have a very fair skin, you need not think me feeble—size and weight is not so often a sign of health and strength either, as is supposed—or the want of it an indication of weakness—indeed, I think the contrary is the case, and that small persons are proportionably stronger than large ones. No, nurse! I am strong and healthy, thank Heaven! and quite adequate to the task of nursing these two children! Besides, oh! consider! I feel so sorry for this poor, destitute little one, she is so thin, so delicate, she can never be raised by hand—she will die if I do not save her. Ah! it would give me too much pain *not* to do this—and I think, suppose *I* had died, would I not have blessed, from heaven, any mother that would have taken *my* child?"

The young mother was right in one thing—her health and strength suffered no diminution from nursing the two infants. The Judge made no objection to this second *protegé*, only smilingly he said—

"My dear Mary, you have a talent for coloni-

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zing—we will send you to the West some day."

Adam Hawk by no word or sign gave evidence of his knowledge of the existence of his grandchild for some time—but then game, braces of quails, canvass-back ducks, benches of ortolen, and other rare river or forest luxuries, found their way to the Mansion House with Adam Hawk's duty to the mistress.

Mary was soon out of her room, and had resumed her place at the head of her father's table. And now there came one of those beautiful spells of weather that often visit this climate, even in the dead of winter, and Mary received the congratulatory visits of her neighbors, the Mountjoys, of Alta Bayou; the Brokes, of Forest Hall; and, in short, of all the county ladies, far and near.

"Pity the babe had not been a boy."

"She will be a great heiress one of these days."

"I wonder whether she will be educated in the Catholic or Protestant religion—the grandfather being Episcopalian and the mother Catholic."

These were some of the comments made by the guests as they would depart. Of Mary's second adopted child they said nothing at all. Her character was so unique, so well known, if not well understood, that the circumstance of the adoption excited no interest by the side of that of the heiress. So passed January. During a second spell of fine weather in the latter part of February, Mary returned some of these visits, and after a final blast of winter in the first week of March, the Spring opened unusually early, and Mary could freely ride or walk about, accompanied by her children and their nurse, Coral, whose marriage with the black prince, for some mysterious reason between the parties, was indefinitely postponed—as *she* said, "Broke off for good!"

CHAPTER IV.

"THE SKELETON AT THE FEAST."

Is there a crime
Beneath the roof of Heaven, that stains the soul
Of man with more infernal hue, than damned
Assassination. *Cibber.*

Spring had fully opened, and Mary, *malgre* all her past trials, was glad with her children and with nature. The Judge, bidding her an affectionate farewell, departed on his circuit, leaving her to superintend the house, the garden, the people, and in some sort the whole estate—but in this weighty responsibility she was aided and seconded in their several departments, by the housekeeper, the overseer, and the gardener Gulliver—so named for his marvellous stories. It was Mary's habit to devote all her forenoons to hearing the different reports, and giving orders to these domestic ministers; and this Coral—whose quick intelligence picked up all sorts of sonorous phrases—called her "Kitchen Cabinet." In the afternoon, it was her pleasure to go rambling with her children, leading little Josey by the hand, and followed by Coral with a babe on each arm. But as the children grew, and Madgie's skeleton form filled out with flesh, they became too heavy a burden for Coral—and then a light wicker carriage, with two seats, was purchased for them, and then Josey grew obstreperous, and insisted upon dragging it himself. Mary tried it herself, and finding indeed that it would be no labor at all even for her little boy to drag it, gave her consent—for of all things Mary loved best to be *alone* with her children. So in that old fashioned guise—namely, Ginnie and Madgie, as the babes were called, seated in the carriage, Josey pulling it before and Mary walking by its side steadying it over rough places—they would go wandering:—down the gradual hill in front of the house, and over the plains covered with soft bright green grass, or by the "still waters" of the clear ponds lying here and there, or through the beautiful groves of trees scattered around; or:—going out from the back of the mansion, ascend the easy and tree-shaded slope that led into the woods behind the house, and entering a broad road that used a long time ago to lead to the county-seat, but that with long disuse was now grass-grown, shady, cool, and fresh, and formed a most delightful avenue through the thick interminable forest. This was preeminently Josey's favorite haunt—for here he found at every step such treasures of nature, plants, insects, flowers, birds, trees of endless variety and interest—and here, too, for its sequestered shade, Mary loved best to come.

One day—it was the first of May—Mary had promised that she would give a woodland May-day fete, and that Josey should have his little neighbors, Viola and Violetta Swan, the twin nieces, and Broke Shields, the nephew of their near neighbor, General Mountjoy, of Alta Bayou; and so at an early hour of the morning, the "Pair of Swans," as the twin-sisters were called, arrived in charge of their cousin, Broke Shields, a fine boy of ten years of age.

The party set out early in the forenoon, and after a ramble through the forest, during which they gathered an abundance of wild flowers, they seated themselves to rest in a forest glade through which the "old road" passed. And when a plentiful repast of light white biscuits, fresh butter, cream, and early strawberries had been spread upon the green grass; the children gathered around this feast, waited upon by Coral,

while her mistress sat apart under the shade of a large oak, and beside the wicker carriage where her babies lay.

The children were in the midst of their hilarity, when an event occurred that speedily put an end to the festivity of the morning.

Mary had just laid Magdelene in the little carriage, and taken up Virginia, whom she was about to fold to her bosom, when the report of a pistol was heard near, and a bullet whistled past her and between herself and the child she held, so that she felt its whiz and heat, and passing through the top of the many-colored turban of Coral and carrying it off, lodged in the bark of a tree on the opposite side of the road. The danger was past as soon as known—but consternation fell upon the little party, who gazed at each other in dismay—and then upon Broke Shields, who had sprung upon his feet, with starting eyes and extended arm, and was staring and pointing in the direction whence the shot was fired—*one instant*—and then with a bound forward he disappeared in the forest. This broke the spell of silent amazement. Viola and Violetta clung to each other, screaming in terror. Josey instinctively sprang to the side of his mamma—his best loved—and threw his arms around her as if to shield her. Coral clapped her hands to her dismantled head, and ran about wildly, asking everybody,

"Am my brains blown out? Am my brains blown out?"

"Be easy, children. The danger is quite over now. It was only some sportsman, who did not know we were here, and who fired at a bird.—They ought not to shoot the poor birds at this season, while they are raising their young, either," said Mary: but her face was ashen pale, she trembled in every limb, and her voice faltered, even while she attempted to re-assure herself and the children.

The children were too much terrified to remain there. The May-day feast was broken up. The little ones cowered around Mary, who only waited the re-appearance of Broke to return to the house. The lad came at length, pale, fatigued and disappointed.

"Why did you run off, my dear boy?—did you see any one?"

"Yes, Mary," answered Shields, who being but six years Mary's junior, and having been her playmate, continued to call the child-mother Mary.

"Whom did you see, Broke?"

"A man!"

"Some sportsman, my boy, never look so heated and angry. It was careless, perhaps, but it was unintentional."

"Was it a white or colored man?" asked Coral, with much interest.

"I don't know—in fact I only saw a pair of legs in dark pantaloons between the trunks of the trees. I could not see the form or face of the man for the thick leaves. I saw his arm protruded—the pistol aimed at Mary's bosom—fired—and the legs spring away—all in a second just as I started up!"

Mary became deadly pale.

"Aimed at mamma! *fired* at mamma!" faltered Josey.

"Fired at Mary," murmured the frightened twins. And the children hovered around their beloved Mary as though they would have covered her.

"Yes, yes, I saw the muzzle pointed—look! look! look! Coral has fainted!"

Coral had indeed fallen in a deep swoon. Mary laid her child in the carriage, arose and tottered toward her fallen maid, stooped over her and attempted to raise her—then turning to the terrified children—she said, in a voice tremulous in spite of herself,

"Go, go, my dear children, hurry to the house and tell Aunt Poll to come quickly. Broke, do you go with them, my dear."

The children departed all but Josey.

"Go, Josey," said she.

"No, mamma! no! never will I leave you in the wicked woods alone," said Josey, who had closely followed his mother.

"Dear Josey, there is no danger. It was a mistake of Broke's. The man was taking aim at something in or near a line with me, but beyond me—there is no danger, darling!"

"But, mamma, you have such white lips, and you shake so."

"It is fright, Josey—only fright—the weakness of the body—my mind tells me there is no more danger, love!"

"Mamma, THERE IS! I feel it here and here—where I feel everything that is true about *you*," said the child, placing one hand on his head, and the other on his heart. "Mamma, go home—leave me here with Coral and the babies."

"Little soldier!" fondly exclaimed Mary, withdrawing her hand from Coral's forehead, which she was bathing, and encircling Josey with her arm. "Little soldier! one of these days what a protector you will be to mamma, and your sisters—but now, love, there is nothing to alarm us. It is only your loving anxiety, darling, that troubles heart and brain."

"Mamma! Mamma! *Was not* Uncle Carey—shot so—*just* so?"

"Merciful Heaven! so he was! and his murderer never discovered, and his motive never even remotely guessed!" faltered Mary, shuddering through all her limbs, and for a moment dropping her face upon her hands.

"Come, go home, little mother!" pleaded Josey, with his arm around her neck.

She returned his embrace, and then said,

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"No, no, I cannot leave Coral here alone—and—and—there can be nothing in it! No! No! It is only a coincidence—it just *happened so*, Josey! I have not an enemy in the world! I never had! And there is not a soul on earth that could be benefitted by my death! It is terrible! It is very terrible! but—it only *happened so!*" said Mary, striving for composure—but so sick—so sick with deadly fear that she could scarcely keep from swooning herself.

The hasty approach of Poll Pepper, followed by two or three of the housemaids and Prince, relieved her; motioning them to raise Coral, she prepared to return to the house, amid the comments, questions, and exclamations of astonishment, fright and horror from the assembled servants. They reached the hall—the children were sent home, and Coral conveyed to bed in a raging brain fever.

So terminated the May-day fete.

After her first fright was over, Mary Washington resolutely withdrew her thoughts from dwelling upon the mysterious event in the Old Road, and gave her whole attention to her children, her maid, and her multifarious household duties. It was four weeks before Coral was up—and so changed! She was no longer "Pretty Coral" or "Merry Coral," and nobody called her as of old, "Coral Red;" she was almost white-Coral, so pale was she. "How she loved her mistress," every one said, "that such an escape from danger should have overwhelmed her so." And Mary herself felt redoubled affection for her hand-maiden. Mary did not deem it necessary to disturb Judge Washington's mind by the relation of these circumstances in any of her letters—and to *herself*, as well as to all the family, and to the neighbors who chanced much to her regret to hear the story, she continually said, "*Of course* it was an accidental shot from some unseasonable sportsman. I cannot possibly think otherwise. I have not—I never *had*—an enemy in the world; and none on earth could be benefitted by my death." But Mary walked no more on the "Old Turnpike Road."

Thus, buried among her hand-maidens, like some Roman matron of old, were the two next months of the Judge's absence passed—and the end of this period brought the first of July, when he was expected to return home.

"Your master will be home to-morrow," she had said to the field negroes, while making her round that afternoon upon her little donkey, in company with Adam Hawk—and taking sweet authority upon herself, dismissing them earlier than usual to their quarters. "Your master will be home to-night, and for *that* and another reason, to-morrow will be a holiday you know—so every man, woman and child, must don their new clean clothes, and be in front of the vestibule to greet him, and see what he has brought for them." And smiling a good-night to them, she turned away. And they were half inclined to regret holiday, master's return, and all, for the reason that his beautiful and gentle daughter would no longer reign in his stead. Mary was in very high spirits for *her*. The Judge had said to her on leaving, three months before, and on concluding his directions to her concerning the management of the estate during his absence—"Thus you see, my child, I leave you a large margin to be filled out at your own discretion. You must not be fettered by any more directions. You must learn to be a planter practical, Mary—for one of these days, when Adam Hawk and I are gathered to our fathers, you will have the whole business upon your own hands—or, what is the same thing or worse, you will have some new overseer who is unfit for his place."

Everything in the Judge's absence had gone marvellously well; and now Mary was prepared to render an account of her stewardship with great pleasure.

"Grandpa is coming home to-night," she had said to Josey on putting him to bed. "Prince has gone with the carriage to St. Leonard to meet him—but it will be late when he comes, and he will be tired, and must not be disturbed by children—so my little boy must even content himself and go to sleep—but he may wake as early as he pleases to-morrow, and come in mother's room—for to-morrow is the first of July, and a holiday—and Josey shall see grandpa, and go to the wild beast show at St. Leonard's, and have his birth-day party out on the Old Road, too." And she kissed and left him to repose. Her two babies were also asleep. And Mary went down to the wainscotted parlor, where she had ordered a late supper to be prepared. And there she awaited him

The carriage returned at nine o'clock, with the Judge, looking hale and cheerful, and full of expressions of delight at returning, and of affection for his Mary. He looked at her with surprise and pleasure. He led her under the light of a chandelier, and looked again. Yes! she was certainly improving—her fair cheeks had rounded and become rosy—she looked considerably less dreamy and spiritual—and more substantial and real—nursing, goodness, active occupation—one or all of these agreed with her assuredly.

"Why, my little daughter I shall certainly superannuate Adam Hawk, who is getting old, and make you my manager, since you thrive so upon farming."

"Perhaps you *will*, sir! when you see the results of my administration; though I fear I should have made a bad regent without the advice and assistance of the great prime minister of agricultural affairs. Now let me help you off with your coat—here is your dressing-gown and

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slippers—so you need not go to your room; but come in to supper, for we have—what do you think? Turtle soup!"

During supper the Judge told Mary that he had invited a party to dine with him on the ensuing "Fourth"—when he said he hoped her dinner would do credit to Southern housewifery in general, and her own skill in particular. Mary smilingly told him to rely on the ablest co-operation of his "Minister of the Interior." And soon after that, the Judge deferring business until the next day, retired to his chamber.

The next day Mary awoke early, and lay awake as usual for an hour watching the day break. The morning was perfectly clear, not the lightest, fleeciest cloud was to be seen as the dull, red dawn of the horizon brightened and brightened into intensest crimson fire that flamed up towards the zenith, lighting into a blaze the flashing waters of the bay—and flushing the soft, green plains with rose color. Mary lay watching the coming of the sun, and it was not indolence that led her to select that time and manner of offering up her morning worship. She prayed before the dawn window as others prayed before altars. Her devotions were scarcely over when Josey's merry voice and quick step were heard—the door was burst open, and he ran in and climbed up for his mother's morning kiss—suddenly he stopped in his gladness and became very grave.

"What is the matter, my love?" asked Mary.

"Oh, mamma, I have just remembered it!"

"*What*, dear?"

Without replying, he asked mysteriously,

"Mamma,—is there anything in dreams?"

"Yes, I think so, my love, a great deal more in dreams than knowledge-proud people like to confess."

"Well, mamma, I think so, too," said Josey, with an approving air.

"What did my little Josey dream, then?"

"Mamma—I dreamed that all of us children—me and you and the babies and Broke were walking up the 'Old Turnpike Road,' and that you carried Virginia in your arms. Well, mamma, I thought on the left side of the road in and out through the trees—now in full sight, and now hidden—walked a great spotted leopard—and, mamma, it seems to me I can see him now as he put out his great, strong, thick fore legs armed with such claws—slowly and slyly, in and out and through the trees as he kept up with us on the grass, and, mamma, *his fire coal eyes were always on you!* turn which way you would, they would turn after you—and I tried to do something, but I couldn't—something held me tight and fast—though all the time I was walking along. Well! I thought we sat down to a feast in the open glade—just as we did *that day*, mamma—and I thought I turned to see if the great leopard was after us—just in time to see his great tail fly up in the air and swell, and his eyes strike fire as he made one bound and sprang upon *you*, mamma!—then I went to throw myself upon him—and I woke up and found it was a dream, and that I was in bed. I was so glad it was a dream, you know, and I went to sleep again and forgot it, and never thought of it until just this moment, mamma!"

"And now, dear, I will tell you how much meaning there was in your dream. I promised to take you to see the menagerie at St. Leonard's this morning, and to give you a feast in the glade of the Old Road this evening—and you went to bed thinking of leopards and festivals, and dreamed of the same."

"Sure enough, mamma!" exclaimed the child, delighted at the natural interpretation.

"And now go and be dressed, darling," said Mary. "For this is going to be a busy, happy day—we are to have breakfast early, and I am to spend two hours in the library with father—then I am to take all the children riding, and let the little boy see the menagerie, and then return to dinner and give the children their festival this afternoon in the forest glade!"

"Oh, mamma! not there!"

"Yes, Josey! our forest glade is too pretty to be deserted, and *we* have nearly deserted it—we have not been there since May-day."

"But, oh, mamma! I shall be so miserable all the time!"

"Shall you? Well, then, mamma will not make her little boy miserable on his birth-day—we will go down the hill and have our feast by the Grove-Spring."

"Yes, yes! that is a nice place, we will go there."

"There, now, go, Josey, and send Coral to me," said Mary, and the child went.

That morning again Judge Joseph (as he was often called) stood upon the vestibule of his mansion, while the men, women and children of his plantation thronged to welcome him home, and to receive of his bounty. He dismissed them pleased and grateful, and went into the breakfast-room, where Mary, at the head of the table, awaited him. When breakfast was over, he called her into his study, and there she gave him an account of what she called her administration of the government. The Judge expressed himself highly gratified with his little regent, and as she sat by him half encircled by his left arm, while his right hand held both hers caressingly, he asked her what had been her regulations—her recreations?

"Gardening."

"No, no, *that* is work, little daughter, though very pleasant work, I grant."

"Well, then, reading."

"*That* is *study*, my Mary. Come! the amusements, now, of my little sixteen year old matron."

"Well, then, riding the donkey, driving out

with Josey and the babies, walking—and one party—a May-day festival for the neighbor's children."

"And no visiting?"

"Oh, yes! I went once to see old Mrs. Swan."

"An old lady bedridden with paralysis fifteen years!—but, my love, I hope you received visitors at home?"

"Yes. Father Lucas was here twice!"

"My little Mary! Look up here, my child! This will not do! housekeeping and farming, visiting the sick, entertaining priests, and waiting on children! So passes your life! The life of Colonel Carey's orphaned and widowed daughter, a child of sixteen years, left to my charge! So would not Charles Carey have acted by a child of mine so left to him! Mary! you must go out more among young people. You must gather them around you also. You must be joyous, my child, as befits your youth!"

"And my *widowhood*, father? Ah, father, I can be happy! You know I can!—you see I *am;* but it is with the earnest happiness that looks to Heaven for its full completeness. I can be happy, father, but not joyous, except in sympathy with the innocent gaiety of childhood!"

"Mary! such solemn renunciation of the joys of social life might befit a mourner of seventy—not one of sixteen. No, no, Mary! You must not isolate yourself. I have other and happier views and hopes for you! Besides, society in a sparse neighborhood like this has large claims upon a young lady of your rank and station.—Mary! much as I love the lost, I cast no selfish, regretful looks back to the irrevocable Past! I look only to the promising Future. I look to see what good it has in store for *you*—no longer my daughter-in-law, but my daughter, upon whom all my hopes are set!"

"Father, may I ever be a daughter to you! I *will*, as long as you will let me! I will never leave you, *dear* father,—*Joseph's* father!—*for I can never forget!*—and the greatest good I aim at in the future, lies beyond the grave!—a reunion with Joseph in Heaven!"

And Mary dropped her head, weeping, upon the bosom of her father—*a little while*—and then lifting her head, and shaking off the sparkling tears, she smiled, as she said,

"I did not want to cry to-day—it is Josey's birth-day—and I promised him—oh, sir! are you engaged this morning?"

"No, Mary."

"Well, then, perhaps—will you take me and the children a drive to St. Leonard's, and let Josey see the menagerie that is staying there for a few days—if it will be no inconvenience to you, sir?"

"Certainly not, my Mary; on the contrary, I have business there, which will make the jaunt perfectly convenient, as well as agreeable."

They separated—the Judge to order the carriage,—Mary to prepare her children for the drive.

They set out in half-an-hour, reached St. Leonard's in another half-hour's rapid drive over the smooth and level new road, saw the menagerie, did the shopping and the other business, and returned in time for dinner. When Mary entered her chamber to change her dress for dinner, she found upon her dressing table several packets, containing dress patterns, shawls, scarfs, etc., of light and cheerful material and a note from her father, saying,

"My Mary must now lay aside her mourning, which has so long reproached Divine Providence, and dress herself, as nature now does, in grateful brightness."

Mary could not wear any of the unmade dresses, but, to comply with his request, she arrayed herself in a graceful white crape dress, and threw a light blue silk scarf—one of the new purchases—over her shoulders, and went down to the drawing-room.

It was about two o'clock in the afternoon, when the children of the neighborhood assembled to the festival of Prospect Hall. According to agreement, Mary took them down to Grove-Spring. This Grove was rather an arm of the forest than an isolated grove, and was freshened and beautified by a clear spring, to which it gave a name. Here were swings and skipping-ropes,—battledores and shuttlecock—graces, and every other conceivable means and appliance of youthful and childish amusement; and here, in various games—in listening to stories—in singing songs, and putting enigmas—in gathering flowers and weaving them into wreaths, or tying them in posies—in chasing butterflies, and then releasing them at Mary's request, the children passed the afternoon, until the sun began to decline in a splendor cloudless as was that of his rising. Then the feast of light bread and butter, cakes, fruit and milk, was spread upon the grass, and the children merrily gathered around it. After the gay and noisy meal was over, Mary proposed to them to return to the house, and prepare to go home, as their parents had sent carriages for them; but, "A dance! a dance first! *one* dance!" pleaded Broke Shields, and the girls seconded him with, "A dance! just *one* dance!" And Mary, with a sigh and a smile, sent for "Uncle Gulliver," who played the fiddle. "Uncle Gull" soon arrived, and began to strum and twang his fiddle strings, "tuning the instrument," while the boys took partners.

"*Mary* shall dance with *me*—no one *shall* but Mary!" exclaimed Master Broke Shields, with a Sultanic authority. "Give me Ginie, Mary, and let me lay her in the carriage while *you* dance with *me*."

Mary shook her head gently, but the bo[illegible]er.

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sisted, while the dance was delayed. At last, fearing to detain the children, and wishing the dance over, that they might return home before sunset, with a second sigh and smile, Mary turned and placed her child in the carriage, when the sharp crack of a rifle was heard. Mary sprang suddenly forward, and sank slowly, slowly, upon her knee, then upon her side, gasping, with difficulty—

"I am struck!—oh, Heaven!"

At the first report of the pistol the children had flown to Mary for protection; they now remained around her, pale and silent, with tearless grief and terror. She was reclining where she had sank, lying a little over on her side, and supporting her head with her left hand, while her right hand pressed the blue silk scarf in a wisp to her breast. Josey knelt by her side, pale and still. Broke Shields was running up the hill towards the house, whither, also, the old fiddler hobled as fast as he could go. A perfect silence reigned, until Judge Washington, without his hat—his hair flying—was seen hurrying down the hill, followed by Adam Hawk, Prince William, Polly, and others. Then the children left Mary, and hurried off to meet him; each eager, amid fear and sorrow, to give his or her report. Scarcely heeding them, Judge Washington hastened to Mary—knelt—raised her upon his knee—looked, with anguish, in her face—her face, calm, except for a slight contraction of the brow, and quivering of the lip, that betrayed her silent agony and her patience.

"Mary! Mary!—oh! my beloved child! what is this?" he groaned, as he drew her into his arms, and lifted her hand, with its wisp of silk, from her. The blood oozed from the uncovered wound. Their eyes met—his, full of astonishment and grief; hers, full of patient sorrow—*both*, full of inquiry.

"Yes, father! *what* is this?" she faintly asked.

But the Judge was ghastly pale, and shaking as with an ague, yet he gave his orders with promptness and precision, as he exclaimed, hurriedly, to those around—

"A sofa! a sofa!—run to the house, Prince, and have a sofa brought. Adam! hasten immediately for Dr. McWalters. Polly! hurry to the house, and prepare a bed, and linen bandages."

Then he turned to Mary himself, trying to stanch the wound, by pressing the scarf to it, and all the time looking in her patient, suffering face, with unutterable love and sorrow. All astonishment, indignation—all wish to pursue and punish her assassin—lost—completely lost in the one feeling of profound tenderness and grief.

The sofa was soon brought, and Mary gently laid upon it, to be carried to the house. As she was about thus to leave the scene of rural festivity, she turned her eyes to the little wicker carriage, wherein sat the two infants—and the Judge, knowing the cause of her anxiety, said—"Have no care, dearest Mary, I will see them safely bestowed."

And Josey, stooping and kissing her, ran to the carriage, and drew it along, close by the side of the moving sofa, and so, followed by all the grieved and terrified children, they returned to the house. Mary was taken to her room, undressed, and laid upon the bed to await the arrival of the physician. And Judge Washington, leaving her there for a few minutes, went below, and hastily dismissed the children to their homes. He had scarcely seen the last little girl into the carriage that had been sent for her, before the gig of the physician rolled up to the foot of the piazza stairs, and Dr. McWalters, agitated by the terrible report that had been carried him, jumped out, and ran up the stairs, where Judge Washington stood to receive him.

"My dear Judge! my dear sir! I trust I have been misinformed—the terror and confusion—Mrs. Washington—"

"Mary has been wounded—come and see her, at once," said the Judge, with forced calmness, and led the way into the house, and up into Mary's chamber.

She lay upon the bed—pale, still, silent, and patient, with both hands pressing a napkin to her breast, and as before, only revealing the agony of her wound by a slight corrugation of the eye-brows, quivering of the lips, and spasmodic twitching of her hands

The doctor approached—and while addressing a few soothing words of encouragement and hope, examined the wound. Judge Washington, in the meantime, standing in the shadow, to conceal the anguish he could not control. With all her heroism, Mary winced and quivered at the slightest touch in one direction. With all his self-command, the doctor could not help betraying the increasing and intense anxiety he felt, as the examination progressed. When it was ended, he turned to the Judge and said—

"Send post to Baltimore, for Doctor ———," (naming the most eminent surgeon of the country.)

"I will! I will!—but, good Heaven! *is there time?*" added the Judge, in a low voice.

"*There is a chance*—let there be not a moment's delay."

Down hastened Judge Washington to the stables, and dispatched Prince, upon the fleetest horse in the stable, telling him to ride day and night, till he reached his destination, for, even then, it would take two days and nights before the surgeon could reach Prospect Hall.

In the meantime, Dr. McWalters, advised and assisted by another physician of some local celebrity, used his best skill for her relief. But all that night Mary lay in patient, silent agony, lest she should give unnecessary pain to her father,

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who kept his watch by her bedside, in the deepest trouble. When he would bend over her, and discover by the spasms of anguish that would traverse her face, that she was not asleep, he would ask—

"Mary, my love, is your wound painful?"

She would willingly have answered "no," or, "not much," but truth forbade her, and she said—

"Not more than I can bear, dear father." After which, she did not speak again for hours, but lay, with her two hands held to her bosom, until the clock struck eleven; then she said to the troubled watcher by her bed—"Go to rest, dear father—*do* go to rest—let no one lose their rest for me—it will do no good." Her fever was now so high, and her anxiety so great that every one should be at ease, that Judge Washington had to soothe her by the promise to retire to bed as soon as she herself should be asleep. As her fever increased, her power of self-control diminished—once she suddenly started up in a sitting posture, as struck by a new terror, and demanded, rapidly—"Where are the children? Where—where are the children? Are they safe? were they hurt? Oh! let me see them!"

Judge Washington put his arm around her, spoke to her soothingly, pointed to the corner of the room, where by her own directions the babies had been placed in the crib at sunset, and where they now slept sweetly; then he gently laid her down—and tremblingly, faintly she murmured—

"Thank you, dear father—never mind my nervousness—it was only a dream; go, go to rest—you are so weary. Oh! let *no* one, still less, *you*, lose their rest for me, it will do no good."

"How do you feel, Mary?"

"Not—very—well! But go to rest, father, I will try to go to sleep." And she closed her eyes and folded her hands, but spasm after spasm oft traversed that highly flushed face, and the little hands that lay together on her bosom sometimes started and fluttered like wounded birds. Without falling asleep, she seemed to get into another delirious dream, for suddenly she started up again—her eyes wildly staring, and exclaimed with breathless haste—"Josey! Josey! where is Josey?—was he struck? is he hurt? Oh! for the Virgin's sake, tell me!"

Again the protecting arms were around her, again the re-assuring voice soothed her, and the strong but gentle hands laid her down and composed her to such rest as she could take. And seeing her close her eyes, the Judge arose softly with the intention of leaving the room and summoning the physician, who slept in the house—and was stealing from the bedside when he felt the light clasp of a child's hand upon him, and turning he saw little Josey—standing there in his white night gown—who said in the softest murmur—

"*I* will go for anything or anybody you want, grandpa."

The Judge looked at him in bewildered surprise for a second, and then murmured low—

"*You* here, my boy?"

"Oh, yes, sir, grandpa, and I know—I know you will let me stay—I will not disturb her, grandpa! I will not even speak to her, or come in her sight for fear of disturbing her. I did not speak to her even when I heard her call my name, for fear of hurting her. Will you only let me stay here, dear grandpa?"

The eyes of the Judge filled with tears, and silently pointing the boy to the chamber sofa that sat against the foot of the bed, he left the room in quest of the doctor. From the effects of a cooling and composing draught administered by the physician, Mary slept till morning, and in the morning awoke apparently better.

Early in the morning, Poll Pepper came into the room to remove the children before they should awake, lest their awakening and crying should disturb Mary. She was stealing away softly with one at a time, and had carried off Magdalene in silence, and had returned and was bearing away Virginia, when the latter awoke and first by crowing, pointing, and other pretty coaxing baby-ways, pleaded to be taken to her mother's bed, and when this was refused her, she demanded it eagerly and angrily by loud screams and violent gestures and struggles. This aroused Mary, who, holding her arms from the bed said,

"Give her to me, Coral."

"It is not Coralline, it's me, Miss Mary—you better let me take the child out, she'll make you more iller."

"No, bring her to me," persisted Mary, her arms still extended to the babe, whose little hands were also held out to her. Polly obeyed, and as she was setting the child upon the bed, "Where is Magdalene?" asked Mary.

"I took *her* away *first*. She woke and held out her hands to go to you the first thing, but I 'fused, and she let me carry her out 'out 'sistance! See how strong natur is to be sure—now Madgie *know* insesestinctively she haddent no right to be a troublin o' you, Miss Mary, and so after the fuss indictment of her wishes she 'plied with my wishes, and let me purwey her out o' the room. But when I comes to take little Miss Ginny out *that* was another guess matter, Miss Ginny know *she* had a right to stay, and so she sets up a squall? See what natur is!"

"Yes, see what nature is," said Mary, "but it is not as you think, Polly—nature possesses no power of divination, and Madgie and Ginnie know no different relation of each other to me. But, Madgie is very easily managed, while Ginnie takes her sanguine, passionate temperament from my mother's family, the red-haired Haroldsens—children of the Dane Harold, the Violent. But

Madgie must not suffer for her meekness—go bring her to me, Polly."

"My dear Miss Mary—"

"Polly, I have no breath to argue with—go—"

Polly unwillingly left the room on that errand, turning her eyes to the last upon her young mistress, who lay back upon her pillow, holding one arm feebly around Virginia.

When she returned to the room with Magdalene, the first thing she saw was that Virginia had crawled up quite to her mother's face and stooping over, was trying intently to do something. Approaching the bed, she saw that Mary had fainted from exhaustion, and that the child, with the impression of her being asleep, was trying with its little fingers to lift her eyelids. Polly, with a look of dismay, seized the infant, and as she carried them both (Ginny screaming and kicking violently) from the room—"out of her grief and impatience," she exclaimed,

"Indeed, it is no manner o' use fer any singly soul to try to do a singly thing for that young gall, 'deed an' 'deed it aint—'cause she's 'termined fur to kill herself, an' Marster Jesus knows it!"—and setting both the screaming children—(Ginnie screaming for anger, and Madgie for sympathy)—down upon the carpet in the parlor, she hurried off for the doctor, who had not yet left the house, and for the Judge, who had for about an hour been lying down to take some sleep.

Both soon entered the chamber. Mary had recovered from her faintness, but the presence of her children, as well as all things that could in the slightest degree disturb, was forbidden her.

From that hour, however, not perhaps in the least from that cause, she grew worse—her wound became very painful, and her fever rose very high. Yet until she became phrenzied with pain and fever, scarcely a complaint escaped her patient bosom. All day she raved in high delirium. Judge Washington watched in speechless grief by her bedside. Towards night, though still delirious, her visions lost their terrible aspect, and as the hours passed on, she became cheerful, even joyous.

She was again in the home of her childhood, full of life, joy and electricity, as she was before the mainspring of her heart had been broken. Now she would call in merry tones to Joseph, her lost husband, and challenge him to a game—now she would cheer on her fancied steed to race against some fancied rival. Now her light laugh would ring merrily through the room. And so it continued nearly all night. And the doctor knew that the *pain* that had originated the fever and delirium was *gone*, while the delirium remained; therefore, he looked graver and more troubled than ever, and no longer evinced any anxiety for the arrival of the "eminent surgeon." Towards morning she grew gradually composed. At dawn she was asleep, and the physician prevailed on Judge Washington, who fondly believed in her amendment, to go and lie down. When the sun arose and shone broadly and brightly in upon her bed, Dr. McWalters got up and drew the curtain over the dawn window, and returning to the bedside, saw that his patient was wide awake, though quiet.

"How are you, Mrs. Washington?"

"Better, I thank you, doctor. Oh, very much better, indeed. I think I have had a whole good night's sleep and pleasant dreams, *very* pleasant dreams! I feel so well and nice this morning. Not the slightest uneasiness anywhere. You are a magician, doctor! Doctor, I think such people ought to be very grateful to their physicians. *I* am!" and she held out her hand to Dr. McWalters, who took and pressed it tenderly, while turning away his head to conceal the tears that arose to his eyes.

"I wonder if father got a good night's sleep last night?—he sat up so late the night before."

"He is not yet up," replied the physician, evasively.

"And the children; I wonder if they slept quietly?"

"Oh, yes," replied the physician, confidently.

"I think, doctor, that after breakfast I may be able to get up and sit in the chair—may I not? My dear father will not be so troubled nor think me so ill if he sees that I am able to sit up. May I not sit up, doctor?"

"My dear Mrs. Washington, I will talk to you more of that after breakfast."

"One more question, doctor. I may have my children to-day?"

"Yes—yes—yes," he said, talking partly to himself, partly to her. "Yes—you may have the children in to-day."

Just at that moment a rap was heard at the door, and Dr. McWalters arose, went to it, spoke to one without a few moments, and closing the door, returned to his patient's bedside.

"*Who* has arrived, doctor, did he say?" she asked.

"Doctor ———, the eminent surgeon from Baltimore."

"Ah! we do not want him now, *do* we, sir?"

"No," replied the family physician, speaking as before half abstractedly.

"But he must be liberally remunerated for his trouble, however, and—by the way, breakfast must be hurried for him, and he must be conducted to a room, as no doubt he has ridden all night and would like to refresh himself by a bath and a change of clothes. Doctor will you touch the bell—I want the housekeeper."

"No, no, dear child, you must not weary yourself. I will go down and put the traveller in charge of the housekeeper," and so saying, the doctor arose and went out, as much to give

vent to the emotion he could no longer control as for any other purpose.

Soon after this Polly Pepper entered the room to set it to rights, inquired of her young mistress how she found herself, and expressed herself highly delighted that she was "doing so well," but heaved a profound sigh nevertheless.

"Where is Coral, I have not seen her since I have been sick?" said Mary.

"She is down stairs," said Polly, but she did not add as she might have added, "*ill* of another brain fever."

Polly had nearly completed her task of arranging the room, bathing her young mistress's face and hands, etc., when the family physician entered, introducing Doctor ———, from Baltimore. Mary received her new physician with a smile, begged him to take the arm-chair at the head of the bed, and apologized to him for what she called the unnecessary alarm and solicitude of her friends which had caused him to take so hasty and unpleasant a journey. Then she inquired if he had breakfasted. The doctor *had*, in company with Doctor McWalters and the Judge, who, by the way, was now below, awaiting in high hope, the opinion of the new surgeon upon his daughter's case. The two physicians spent half an hour by the bedside of the sick, and then retired to the library in consultation a few moments, before entering the parlor, occupied by the Judge.

In the meantime, Polly Pepper, having left her young mistress's room, went down to carry the good news to the Judge, who, as soon as he saw her enter, exclaimed, cheerfully,

"Well, Polly! well! you have come to tell me that my child is a great deal better!"

"Oh, yes, young marse! Miss Mary is a great deal better, indeed! I hearn the doctor tell her she might—'*haps* she might—don't let me falsify the truffe—'*haps* she might even set up to-day—and to be sure she might even have the children in the room—'deed I hearn him say myself that there wa'nt no use in the new city doctor comin' at all, now."

"Thank Heaven! oh, thank Heaven!" fervently exclaimed the Judge. "Has she taken anything?"

"No, sir,—but I thought I'd 'quire of the doctor first what I might give, and so I jes' did, and so he says, 'anything she wishes,' and so, young marse, I'm gwine to take her up a cup of tea, a saft-biled egg, an' some water crackers, as she was a wantin' of, sir."

"She *asked* for that?"

"Yes, sir, young marse."

"Then she must, indeed, be very much better—thank Heaven!, oh, thank Heaven! Do not keep her waiting! hasten, Polly, hasten, and do her bidding!"

Polly left the room, and the Judge walked the floor in the restlessness of joy—impatient *now* to hear the report of the physicians, only that after it he might hasten to Mary's bedside, and congratulate her on her convalescence.

Not soon enough for his impatience, but soon the door swung open, and the Judge, with a stately joyousness, advanced to meet the two doctors, but checked himself half-way, smitten by the gloom of their faces with a vague but painful presentiment. The eminent surgeon withdrew himself, and remained standing by the corner of the mantel-piece, and the family physician, taking Judge Washington's hand with an air of profound and respectful commiseration, invited him to a seat by the window, and placed himself in a chair by his side, saying, while he still held his hand,

"My dear friend! my honored friend!—Judge Washington, you are not new to grief! You possess great fortitude, I know—yet how shall I tell you that which I have to communicate—your Mary—"

"Well—well—in Heaven's name go on!"

"She cannot survive many hours—mortification has taken place."

Judge Washington suddenly withdrew his hand from the clasp of the doctor's, got up, sat down again, pale as ashes—covered his face with both hands, and only betrayed by the heaving of his chest, and the shuddering of his whole frame, how heavily the sudden blow had fallen under which he had to bear up.

At last he lifted up his head and asked,

"Does she know it?—does *Mary* know it?"

"Ah, no, sir!—the approach of death has brought her ease—she thinks she is better—she talks of rising—"

"How long may she live?"

"On earth, not many hours."

"*Hours*—only *hours!*"

Again the Judge covered his face with his hands, and struggled to subdue his great emotion. When he lifted his head again, the doctor said,

"If there is anything that you could wish Mrs. Washington to do, or that she could wish to do—any disposition of the property, she—"

"Peace! peace! She holds no property—she is not yet seventeen years old. But yet, Mary must not be deceived—she must be permitted to meet death consciously—Mary has faith, hope, and love enough to cast out fear, for herself or the helpless ones she leaves behind her. Doctor, suffer me to leave you."

The physician lifted and pressed his hand respectfully again, and the Judge slowly and heavily withdrew from the room. He went into his chamber—knelt, bowed his face upon his hands and prayed. Strengthened then, he arose, and calmly passed into Mary's room.

The chamber wore the cheerful air of a convalescent's sick room. The bed was made—the furniture neatly arranged—fresh cedar branches in the fire-place—fresh flowers on the mantelpiece, and near the bay window—"the dawn window"—in the large, blue damask-covered arm chair, sat Mary—surrounded by her children. She wore the thin muslin morning wrapper which the warm July weather permitted, and her chesnut hair was smoothly parted over her forehead, and carried back under the edge of a fine lace cap. She looked wan, fragile, faint, but inexpressibly beautiful, as she leaned sideways towards the corner of her chair, and resting her elbow upon the arm of the chair, leaned her head upon her hand, and watched and talked to her children. Magdalene and Virginia were sitting on the carpet, playing, and Josey was standing by her side, wearing the most serious countenance of all.

As Judge Washington entered the room, he slightly started at seeing Mary really up, and an expression of intolerable pain passed rapidly over his countenance.

As soon as she saw him, Mary lifted her head, and smilingly held out her hand to him. He came and took it, drew a chair to her side, and sat down.

"How does my dear child feel this morning?" he asked.

"Well!—*so* well, dear father, that you must not look so pitifully upon me—I feel *very* well."

"*Well*, Mary? *Well!*"

"*Considering*, you know, father; my wound feels perfectly easy—I only feel faint, and I do not think that my circulation is quite healthy yet—my hands and feet are—a little cold—and my breath is not free, quite. But now that I have had my bed made, I shall lie down; and shall soon be right."

Judge Washington, to conceal his deep emotion, and to gain time for composure, stooped and lifted Virginia to his knee, who immediately threw her arms around his neck and kissed him. Mary's head had sunk again upon her hand—and a grayness crept slowly over her face and vanished. She said, speaking faintly as before—

"I see, father—you often lift Virginia to your knee—and never Magdalene; don't you like little Madgie?"

In reply to this, the Judge lifted Madgie to his his other knee, where the child sat quietly.

"Will you not lie down now, dear Mary?" he next inquired.

"No, not yet, father. I said I would sit up half an hour—I have only been up a quarter; and indeed I prefer sitting here. Father! it does not seem to me as if I were sick, while I am sitting here."

"Still, my dear Mary, I think it is not well to exhaust your small strength."

"Dear father!" replied Mary, speaking slowly and faintly, "I am not sure, after all, that it is sitting *here* which wearies me—I rest very well leaning so—and—somehow, father—I have a strange, strange depression of spirits at the idea of going back to bed; please let me sit here as long as possible."

"Sit as long as you like, my beloved child," replied the Judge.

It was hard, hard, calmly to sit there and to see the rapid approach of death to its unconscious victim.

"Mary," he said tenderly, calmly, for he had now mastered himself; "Mary, my child! if God were to call you to Himself, should you be resigned to go?"

"*Resigned!* dear father! *resigned* to obey the summons of my Heavenly Father! That is scarcely a loving or a faithful word!" said Mary, as a holy radiance illumined her beautiful countenance an instant, and vanished. "Yet, father, were He to summon me away, I should not go all in gladness; oh, no! how could I, and leave my children and *you*, father? No, I should feel in death somehow as I felt in marriage—joyous and sad—sad to leave *these* I love—joyous to go to *those* I love," concluded Mary, perhaps not without some suspicion of the bearing of his words, for she became very serious.

"Mary", said he, taking her hand, and looking gravely and tenderly in her eyes—those meek blue eyes, that looked so lovingly up to meet his own—those mildly questioning eyes, so soon to be closed forever. "Mary," he said, "were God to call you to Himself, could you not trust your beloved ones to me, fearlessly?"

"Yes, father! oh, yes, father!" she replied, without withdrawing her eyes—nay, they became more intense, more searching in expression, and she inquired calmly, "What did you mean by that question, father?"

"He replied first by a long and tender gaze, deep, deep into those asking eyes—and then winding his arm around her and drawing her head upon his bosom, he replied,

"Mary, my Mary, it is even so; God has called you to Himself."

Mary's hands flew suddenly up before her, and holding them thus, she shrunk away as one does before a sudden burst of too much light.

Her adopted child heard all, and stood motionless and colorless, on her other side; but nobody noticed him.

Judge Washington bent towards her.

"Mary, my dear child!"

"Father!"

"How is it with you, my Mary?"

"Stunned and blinded by too sudden, too much light, but it will soon be over, father." And soon it was—and she turned her calm face to him and said, "They may lay me on the bed

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now, father—perhaps I may live longer so; and I have somewhat to say to all."

Judge Washington summoned assistance, and she was conveyed to bed. Josey followed in the same quiet manner, and stood silently by her side. She saw him, and turning her face towards him, held out her hand—he took it, and with an effort—a mighty effort, for a little child, swallowed the sobs and forced back the tears that would have burst forth.

"You heard what grandpa said, Josey?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Josey, listen to me, dear, and try to remember my words, and you will take their meaning by-and-bye. You and I, *Josey, will never be separated by death, because we know each other and love each other so much.* When I have disappeared from your sight, hearing, and touch, Josey, seek me with your love—and your love will find me; often will I come to you, Josey; but you must have faith to receive me; you will not see or hear me, but in happy, peaceful, loving emotions, your spirit will *feel* me, if you will only believe it; you *will* believe it. I shall not come from the spirit-world, and stand by the side of an unhappy unbelieving child, whose want of faith shuts me from his spirit. Ah! I do not know how to make you know. Shut your eyes, Josey, and turn yourself towards the South windows—now, Josey—can you *see* the sun?"

"No, mamma!"

"But you feel the warmth, and know that he is shining."

"Yes, mamma."

"So, Josey—to the senses of your body, and even to the faculties of your mind, I shall be lost; but to the purest love and highest aspirations of your spirit, I shall be ever present. And when you sit or walk apart, adoring God, loving his children, and remembering with tenderness, 'little mother'—and you almost feel her presence in your heart—know that it is really so, that she is really there, watching over you, loving you, teaching you still—teaching you Divine truths, perhaps she has learned in Heaven; that she is nearer to you than ever she was in the body, because she communes with your inmost self. You do not understand this truth now—"

"But I have got it in my heart, mamma, and I love it."

"And mamma will make it dearer to you, when she comes constantly from God to her child. Oh, little one! I have told a deep truth—one that I dared not tell to many gray-haired men, good and wise though they might be." She paused from exhaustion—then seeing her father approach soon after this, she held her hand out to him, and as he stooped very low over her, she took his face between her hands, and looking in his countenance, at first with profoundest sympathy and grief, through which at last, faith, hope, and love, shone as shines the sun through clouds, she said—"Poor worn face! sorely tried heart! bear up! God is in this as in all things!"

But his fortitude for a moment was quite overcome, and he bowed his head upon his hands and wept, after gasping—

"Oh, Mary! so good, so young!" and unable to stand, he sank down in the chair by her side.

Mary watched him for a while, and then said, in a voice, faint but clear and sweet as angel's whispers—

"Yes, life has been short, but very sweet to me. The earth has been so sublime with its high mountains, its deep valleys, and its great waters; so glorious with its rising and its setting sun; so beautiful with its forests, fields, and flowers; so lovely with its little children. Oh, yes! the world has been so beautiful—friends have been so kind—life has been so sweet to me; and when those dear ones, who loved life with me, passed away, they drew my vision after them to a higher, sublimer, more beautiful life above; and now I go after them. But now I go to God. Think you, because I go to God, I leave you? Ah, no! dear father, no! I shall pass from your sight, to enter your soul; to come into a closer communion with you, if you will receive me—in every gentle thought of me, receive me. Oh! I will come to you bearing many a happy inspiration. You shall have more faith, and hope, and love, because I go to God. I will be often near you—and when you see my baby smile in her sleep, believe that it is awakened by her spirit-mother's kiss. When you dream of me, believe that I have been really with you. Do *you* hear, my Josey. Heaven and its angels are not far up in the sky—as little children are misled to believe; Heaven and its angels are all around about us!"

She paused from faintness, but her radiant countenance was still eloquent with all that her words had failed to complete.

It looked not like a chamber of death. The two little ones were playing on the carpet, varying baby sport sometimes with baby wrangles that were soon over—and often their crow and laugh would ring pleasantly through the room; but at last they grew restless, and Josey went to quiet them—and not succeeding, Judge Washington touched the bell, and summoned Polly to carry them out. As she was passing, however, Mary faintly called her to bring them to her, and asked her father to raise her up in his arms. He did so, and the babes were brought and set upon the bed before her. Then, for the first time, the mother's heart of flesh melted, and tears arose to her eyes and overflowed her cheeks; folding her arms feebly around them both, and dropping her head upon them, she sobbed,

"Oh, children! children! Oh, children! chil

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dren!" and this she said many times. After having kissed Magdalene, she motioned Polly to take her, and then looking long and earnestly in Virginia's little face, she said,

"Oh, Ginnie! Ginnie! that you could remember me! Look at mother, oh, Ginnie! Let her try to leave her features on your heart; for oh, Ginnie! never till now did I feel how much beyond all things on earth or in Heaven, save God, I love you, little one! Oh, Ginnie! remember me, mine only one!" she said, gazing profoundly in her countenance, as if, in desperate love, she hoped to leave upon the infant's soul the impress of its mother's face. Then fondly again and again kissing the child, whose heart seemed to have received what its intellect missed, she permitted her to be taken away, and sank back into the arms of her father, almost dead. He laid her gently on the pillow, and resumed his seat by her side. When she was somewhat recovered again, she felt a gentle clasp on her hand, and turning her eyes, she saw Josey, who said to her—

"Ginnie shall remember you, mamma—she knows you now so well, and your portrait is so much like you, that I will never let her forget you. I will keep up the memory; every morning, before she says her prayers, she shall see your portrait. Every night, before she sleeps, shall she see it, mamma. Every day will I talk to her of you, and when she loves me most, I will bid her remember you, dear little mother."

She pressed the little hand that clasped hers, and said,

"Josey, in the course of nature, grandpa may go to Heaven before Ginnie grows up.—You are a little child,—oh, I mean *because* you are a little child, I leave Ginnie in your care. You are not much older than she is, and therefore you may go all through life together. I have so much trust in you, so much hope of you, Josey! Love my child, and make her good!"

"Love me from Heaven, and make me good enough to do it, mamma."

All day her father and her adopted child remained with her—all day, until—according to the custom of the church in which she had been brought up—the priest came to administer the last consolations of religion to one whom God Himself had comforted already.—The priest came to impart faith and strength for the trial to the passing angel, and went away with a purer heart, and a higher faith, and greater courage.

Bruin had been in to see her.

"It is better," he said, "than a thousand learned discourses on the Evidences of Christianity, this passing away of Mary—never did I feel immortality as now."

Her father and her boy returned to the room, where they remained all night. Her children were brought in for the last time before they were put to bed. Then she kissed, and blessed, and resigned them with an angel smile.—She was sinking fast, but the spirit grew brighter and brighter as the clay fell away.—Sometimes she spoke, but though the words were faint in sound, they were strong and hopeful in import. Towards morning, she became perfectly silent, and lay holding Josey's hand while her father held her other hand.

The day was dawning clearly, clearly, brightly through the East window at the foot of her bed. Then she began to speak again, and some one said she was delirious, when, drawing her hand from her father's clasp, she pointed to her dawn window, through which the newly-risen sun was pouring a broad, bright ray from the Eastern horizon to her bed, and said, while a divine radiance illuminated her countenance,

"Behold the Angel of the Lord! Behold DEATH the Beautiful! the Deliverer! Behold the path of glory down which he comes from God!"

"God" was her last word; slowly, slowly, her arm fell—slowly, slowly, the light faded from her countenance, as the invisible angel released and bore her invisible to "God!"

The bereaved father calmly composed the head and folded the hands of the beautiful sleeper; knelt and prayed a few moments, and rising, left the chamber, to send in those whose sad duty it was to perform the last offices of the living to the dead.

Josey remained statue-like by the bedside, until one of the women took him gently by the hand, and leading him to the door, put him out and closed it behind him.

There he stood a moment, bewildered; then, with a vague, delirious wish to escape from—something—he knew not what, himself perhaps—or the first sharp agony of bereavement—so new, so strange, so insufferable to the young child—he threw both hands to his temples, and started into a run. Down the stairs he ran, and through the passage-way,—out of the front door, down the stone steps and across the lawn—down the hill with frantic haste, and across the plains,—on and on he ran, until, exhausted, he fell forward upon his face, where the waves of the Chesapeake Bay washed the beach.

In the grief and dismay of the household it was long before he was missed, and then, when inquiry was set on foot, some negro children, who had seen his insane flight, directed the search towards the bay, and there they sought and found him, insensible. They bore him back to the house, and when he came to himself in Bruin's arms, he looked up in his face, and said,

"I forgive Paul *now*, for dying—only God can give courage to live, after she we love best has died."

In reply to this, Bruin took him to Ginnie, who was screaming frightfully with grief and anger—not, of course, because of the loss of her mother, whose loss she did not know, and could not understand—but, because Adam Hawk, who was an ogre to all children, had entered the room before her very eyes, and despite her cries, had lifted up in his arms and borne off the tranquil little Madgie, her playmate—her shadow—her other self. Well might the impetuous little Ginnie scream for her sister, for years would pass, and the indelible impress of character would be stamped by education upon each, before they would meet again.

The funeral of Mary Washington took place upon the fourth day after her death. It was attended by numerous relatives and friends, crowds of the gentry of three or four counties, and many others whom affection, respect, gratitude, or a morbid curiosity had brought to the house where so deep a tragedy had been enacted. Profound indeed had been the consternation of the whole community when the news of Mary Washington's assassination had spread from house to house. Bruin the dwarf, had made a deposition before a neighboring magistrate, imploring at the same time that the investigation might proceed without disturbing Judge Washington, who, besides being in the deepest sorrow, really know nothing about the catastrophe—having been absent from the spot at the time of its occurrence. The magistrate then summoned those among the children who had seen the fatal event, and whose age rendered them competent witnesses. Broke Shields was among the most important of these. He deposed to what he had seen at the May-day festival, in the forest-glade, on the Old Turnpike Road—and what was much more to the purpose, he testified that he had a second time seen from the cover of the woods, the man who had fired the deadly ball. He swore to the pantaloons being the *same*. He knew them—they were very peculiar garments—looking very dark, and strong, and coarse, and very much torn, as if by violence, and nowhere mended. The man he described as being slight and wiry in figure; dark and emaciated in face, with shaggy black brows, and stringy black hair. His general appearance, wild and savage; he had seen him but a second, as he had fired and leaped into the forest.

This was the best testimony that could be gathered, and beyond this all was dark. Who the man was, none could guess, and what his cause of enmity to one so young, so fair and good as Mary, none could imagine.

Then the memory of Captain Carey's mysterious murder, little more than a year previous, and the almost unprecedented train of death and disaster that had followed—struck with terror the hearts even of the most courageous, and caused even the least superstitious and imaginative to feel that some malign star reigned over the destinies of the doomed family, and that some hidden, potent, and implacable enemy had vowed their extermination.

The State authorities took the affair up zealously. The Governor offered a large reward for the discovery and apprehension of the murderer. The papers were filled with accounts of the tragedy, and every circumstance bearing upon it, however remotely. Many private individuals added largely to the reward offered by the chief magistrate of the State, for the arrest of the heinous assassin.

Buried in the deepest grief for the untimely loss of the gentle daughter who had been to him as his last, his only child, the youthful widow of his only son—the comfort, stay, and hope of his declining years—the bereaved father had no thoughts to give to vengeance, or even to justice, and it was not until the morning after the funeral, when some of his oldest and most intimate friends called upon him with fervent expressions of sympathy, and earnest offers of service, that the JUDGE awoke to the calls of Justice—and then terrible indeed might have been the awakening, but for the habitual restraints of religion, whose life-long control over his actions, could not now be shaken off by one tempest of calamity or passion, however great and violent. So, after the first dark gathering of his brows, and the first impulsive, fierce flashing of the eyes, his countenance settled, and he said—

"Friends! friends! it is not for ME to take an active part in the pursuit and apprehension of this guilty man. I am too deeply, sorely stricken! My wounds still bleed and smart, and any measure I should take for the arrest of the criminal, would savor more of passionate vengeance than intelligent justice. You who have cooler heads and quieter hearts take this matter from my hands."

And now, unable to recover his composure amid scenes in which such terrible calamities had occurred. Judge Washington prepared to remove his family to a new estate he had recently purchased, and which comprised the whole of a small and beautiful islet that lay immediately opposite Prospect Plains, but ten leagues off on Chesapeake Bay.

The plantation of Prospect Plains, with two-thirds of the field hands upon it, the Judge determined to leave under the charge of Adam Hawk. The remaining third of his laborers, together with the whole of his household servants, he resolved to carry with his family to the isle.

It was on the night before his departure, that

on returning from his last visit to the grave of Mary, he found Adam Hawk standing before him.

"Judge Washington, return with me again to the grave of your daughter," he said, respectfully, but in stern, deep tones, and the Judge mechanically complied.

The moon was shining down clear and bright upon the new and glistening tombstones—so many of them—in the family burial ground, when they paused beside the newest grave, that of Mary, which lay between them, and across which they spoke.

"Judge Washington, my patron and my best friend," said Adam Hawk, "until this moment I have not opened my lips upon that dark subject which has filled all minds and been upon all tongues for many weeks. But, now that you go hence for many years, hear me. That of which I have *said* nothing, I have *felt* much, and *thought* more. I have not been unmindful of the great goodness of you and yours to me and mine—now hear me! I permitted the destroyer of *my* child to die in his bed, because *his* life was not forfeit to the laws for *his* crime, else he had not lived to this time; *but!*—by the eternal justice of God! if the murderer of *your* child lives on sea or land, alive or dead, shall sea or land deliver him up! And like the Nazarites of old, in memory thereof, nor razor nor scissors shall touch my grizzled hair until that unknown demon stands upon the scaffold—so help me God!"

Never before had the latent Indian blood of Adam Hawk risen up so luridly as now, when, with his sharply-cut aquiline profile strongly relieved against the moonlight, he stood stern, dark and fierce, and took his oath of unsleeping vengeance.

Judge Washington stood for a while in silence, and then passing his arm within that of Adam, and resting upon the physically stronger man, he said—

"Let us go hence, Adam. The outraged community will cast forth the murderer from its bosom—nay, violated nature herself, in her wildest solitudes, will give no shelter to the criminal! Justice will have its course, but let it *be* justice!"

"Yes, JUSTICE!" exclaimed Adam Hawk, raising, with flashing eye, one arm to heaven.—"Yes, justice!—not—not *mercy*—not any degree of mercy! JUSTICE!" continued Adam Hawk, shaking aloft his lifted arm.

"Not *vengeance*, my friend! Come, now, let us talk of something else—your little granddaughter, Magdalene. We are both in the same case now, Adam, old companion—each with an orphan grand-daughter on his hands. Each infant is as much as one of us can attend to in its infancy; but, Adam, after that I will care for the education and after prospects of my Mary's adopted girl."

Adam Hawk gravely bowed his thanks, though it is probable, in his pre-occupation, he had not heard exactly what was said.

Very early the next morning, Judge Washington and his household embarked in the packet boat that lay at the landing of Prospect Plains, and set sail for the sunny isle.

BOOK SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

MAGDALENE.

Who will believe that, with a smile whose blessing
Would like an angel's soothe a dying hour,
With voice as low, as gentle, and caressing
As e'er passed maiden's lip in moonlit bower;

That underneath that face like summer ocean's,
Its lip as moveless and its cheek as clear,
Slumbers a whirlwind of the heart's emotions,
Love, hatred, pride, hope, sorrow—all save fear.

Halleck.

Ten years have passed since the tragedy resulting in the severance of our young foster sisters was enacted—ten years, and the perpetrator of the crime remains undiscovered—ten years, and the glittering new white tombstones of the family burial ground have grown gray with age and green with mould—ten years, and the proprietor of Prospect Plains has never revisited his plantation.

Ten years—and Joseph Washington has passed all this time in his official duties, or at his home of more than ideal beauty—his island home

"On the Ches'peake's blue waters far off and alone,"

where his grand daughter, Virginia, was growing up a little queen of an isolated little kingdom.

Ten years—and Adam Hawk still resided at Blackthorn Grange, and still managed the estate, or passed his leisure hours in the education of his grand daughter Magdalene.

At the time I write of, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Episcopal Churches nearly equally divided the religious faith of the States of Maryland and Virginia;—the Roman Catholic having the ascendancy in the former, the Protestant Episcopal in the latter. Other denominations were almost unknown in these two States.

The old Episcopal Parish of All Souls—one of the very oldest in Virginia, covered the best part of three counties, and had been for many years under the pastoral charge of the Reverend Theodore Hervey, a near relative of him of the "Meditations"—who had been sent out from England as a missionary to the parish, and afterwards retained by it as the stationed and resident minister.

The Old Forest Church, as All Souls Church was sometimes called, and the old parsonage had

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been repaired for him, and as the declining parish revived and prospered under his ministry, a liberal salary was subscribed for him. He had married Helen Broke, the daughter of the wealthy Major Broke, of Forest Hall, and this connection greatly augmented his influence and prosperity. One son and one daughter, Theodore and Helen, had blessed this union.

Among the most important and influential of his parishioners were, besides the Brokes, of Forest Hall, the Washingtons, of Prospect Plains, the Mountjoys, of Alla Bayou, and Gen. Wolfe, of Mount Storm.

Joseph Washington and Adam Hawk were both professors of the Episcopal faith; both members of All Souls Parish; both had received the rites of Christian baptism at the font, and of Christian confirmation at the altar of the Old Forest Church; both had knelt at the same communion table, and as boys, youths and men, both had set under the same preaching for nearly fifty years—the last twenty years being under that of the Reverend Theodore Hervey—thus both held the same articles of Christian faith—both possessed the reputation of eminent piety, and both were equally *sincere*. But here all parallel between the religion of the two men ended. Each enjoyed religion in his own way, and a far different way, and nothing could be more dissimilar than the *effect*—through the modifying influences of natural constitution, temperament, and *home* education—produced upon the character of each.

Joseph Washington was a man of warm temperament, of genial, social affections, of large benevolence, and great philanthropy—in a word, naturally GOOD GROUND for the seed of Gospel truth to fall on, and he had received the word in joy—he had inhaled the very spirit of Christ—the Faith that soothed all his sorrows, plucking the sting from death itself—the Hope that added to all his joys the crown of immortality—the Love of God and his Neighbor that inspired all his thoughts, words, and actions—"the PERFECT LOVE that casteth out fear," which led him to look through all apparent contradictions and impossibilities to the final judgment as the day of great Redemption. Thus it was Joseph Washington's highest, purest joy to contemplate with reverential love and worship the benignities of the Divine character and law.

Adam Hawk had gotten the thirty-nine articles of the church well beaten into that hard head of his, and, perhaps from the alloy of that stern North American Indian blood, or his constitution and temperament generally, or his early *home* training, or all of these together—but—all *he* saw and felt in his religion was—original sin, total depravity, the wrath of God, and—barring a soul like his own plucked here and there as a brand from the burning—eternal perdition; and these terrible subjects possessed a strong attraction for his own dark, fierce, and sanguinary soul. He joyed to think of the final judgment, of the consuming wrath of an Almighty God, of the tremendous fall of the wicked, of the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone—and when he thought that he himself should be there to see the grand final catastrophe of the tragedy of life—with his own eyes and not another's!—he experienced an atrocious rapture such as might fire the fierce soul of a North American savage at the prospect of the scalping, torturing and burning of an infinite number of foes.

These, reader, were the two men that were respectively the earliest educators of our two foster sisters, Virginia and Magdalene, and who, for the first ten years of their lives, had had almost the exclusive charge of forming or developing their characters.

We need have no misgivings for Virginia, passionate and impetuous as we already know her to have been, we know also that she has been in excellent hands—we will, therefore, leave her for the present in her island home, and turn to Magdalene.

For some children, and in some respects for Magdalene, Adam Hawk would not have made a bad educator, for he was a man of strict truth, stern justice, pure integrity—and he had no dearer wish than the earthly, the immortal weal of his grand daughter—nay, perhaps, his savage joy at the thought of the grand spectacle of the final judgment would have suffered some alloy, had he been sure that Magdalene would have been consigned to eternal flames. Yet truth, justice, integrity were the only virtues he really fostered in Magdalene—virtues which were naturally and by inheritance hers;—while his severe code and harsh discipline developed and cultivated to its utmost, that latent, hard implacability of temper, received through him from her stern Indian forefathers; that bad spirit which formed the evil half of her dread nature, and which, in after years, flooded her own life, and that of another with the darkest calamity.

Education, perhaps, never will be fully understood and perfected until phrenology, the youngest of the sciences, be elevated to an equal rank with its sisters.

No one with the knowledge of character which phrenology gives, would have taken a child like Magdalene Hawk, a child of wonderful force of character, a child full of self esteem, firmness, destructiveness—full of all things that go to make up an excessively proud, strong, free, self-reliant and self-sufficient nature—a child so fearless and exultant, that even in infancy, in the midst of a storm, she had clapped her hands and crowed back in joy to the thunder.

There never was a more beautiful child than Magdalene Hawk was at ten years of age. So tall was she for her age, that she would have

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been taken to be two years older, and so harmoniously proportioned, that every slightest motion was the perfection of grace. Her finely turned head and neck had that naturally majestic grace we see in the swan—her rounded limbs tapered off to the slenderest wrists and ancles, ending in the smallest and most elegant of all hands and feet. Her step had the elastic stateliness of the deer's. Her complexion was clear and brilliant—her Indian blood giving only the darker, richer tinge to the bright crimson of her cheeks and lips—her hair was long, black and straight, her features were slightly aquiline — her eyebrows jet black, arched, and tapering towards the points—her eyes were wonderfully large, dark and lustrous, and fringed by eyelashes jet black, and so very long, straight and drooping, that they threw those large eyes always into shadow—concealing their expression, and—combined with very full, red, and beautiful lips, gave to her countenance an air of luxurious languor—of the omnipotent fascination of which the maiden of after years was quite as innocent as the child of to-day. Perfectly beautiful as Magdalene was—or rather *because* she was *perfectly* beautiful—there was nothing delicate or fragile about her.

Strength, eloquence, beauty, and repose—these were the group of ideas suggested by Magdalene Hawk, when the first delighted surprise of first seeing her passed off.

She was a solitary child—motherless, sisterless, companionless, unless Adam Hawk, her grandfather, and Gulliver Goblin, his only servant, could be called companions. And perhaps, because she *was* a solitary child, she became a charming one, and that her infant life seemed to her like the winter morning twilight of her own native plains—when the day was dark with remaining night, and overcast with clouds, and moaning with the monotonous sound of the surge upon the shore—coming from night, dark, cold, gloomy, obscure, and full of threatening sounds and sights.

"Of what are you thinking now?" would Adam Hawk ask, as the child would let the lump of seedy cotton wool she was picking drop upon her lap, while she fell into a reverie by the great fire of the keeping room upon the windy winter nights —"What are you studying about *now?*" he would ask.

"I am wondering where I first came from, and trying to remember," would be the truthful reply of the strange child.

"God created your body out of the dust of the earth."

"Yes, I know He did, as He does the flowers and trees, but I am different from them and from it—where did *I* come from?"

"God breathed into your nostrils the breath of life."

"I know—I know where my breath comes from —I draw it in and send it out every moment since the Lord first gave me the power to do it—but—where did *I myself* come from first of all?—not my body and my breath, but, *I* MYSELF, that studies and wonders and never sleeps?"

Then would follow a section of catechism and an explanation of the subject that ought to have been perfectly satisfactory, only it was not, for Magdalene would immediately reply—

"Yes, I know—you told me that before—but what I was trying to remember, was, where I came from first of all, and I was just going to recollect, when you spoke to me and put me out—I do wish I could remember it, but I feel as if it were a very sad place."

Adam Hawk would repeat for the thousandth time, that a child would ask more questions than a philosopher could answer in a thousand centuries, and exhorting her to mind and complete her task of cotton picking before bed-time—return to his book or his thoughts.

The only other occupant of their fire-side, would sit on his haunches, propping his chin on his hands, his elbows on his knees, and study Magdalene for hours together, watching the calm and beautiful face, the mature and thoughtful expression, and shaking his head slowly, slowly, would mumble—

"She ain't right—she ain't!—She ain't human—she ain't! Look at her now! She is either one of the Angels of the Lord, or else she is the Ole Satan hisself in female form!"

This was Gulliver Goblin, the superannuated gardener of Prospect Plains—now the man of all work to the overseer—"Gulliver Goblin," so called from his mendacious propensities and his marvellous tales, all of a raw head and bloody bones character. Gulliver Goblin, or Mr. Biggs Chisselly, as he called himself, united in his own person many more offices besides those of plantation gardener, overseer's man, historian and story teller—he was a sort of self-constituted magistrate on the estate, and self-ordained preacher at the meetings, and the fiddler in general to the neighborhood. In his magisterial dignity he would often decide how much of perquisites or plunder should be given with a girl in marriage—in his clerical character he would pronounce the marriage benediction, and in his musical capacity he would then play the fiddle for the company to dance—and not unfrequently entertain the company with some horrible story, or improvise a humorous sketch of something that had occurred in their circle. *This* was his *forte*—he was great on the fiddle, greater on the banjo, but greatest in grotesque satirical improvisations. Gulliver Goblin was indeed, and in truth, one of those "mute inglorious" Paganinies of whom a few may be always found among the negroes of the Southern plantations, whose general musical genius is too well known to be denied. A great

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terror was Uncle Biggs and his banjo to evil doers among the negroes of the whole neighborhood—more than every other penalty for misdemeanor, they dreaded being "put upon the banjo" by Uncle Biggs. Gulliver Goblin was a solitary old man—all his family, as he often said at meeting, "had succeeded him to the land from whose burning no traveller returneth,"—that is to say, his parents, brethren and sisters, had passed away in the course of nature. Uncle Biggs had never married—he had been jilted once by Mrs. Polly Pepper, and that peppering he said had seasoned his heart so highly that it was proof against all the 'fluencys of beauty and time. Gulliver Goblin would have taken strongly to our lonely child—only there was a natural reserve and state about the little one that made him somewhat shy of her. He would circle around her as a great black bug about a bright candle—he would admire her, study her, wonder at her, and be half afraid of her—beautiful woman-child that she was! Sometimes—very seldom, Magdalene would notice him by asking some strange question upon subjects that only he might be able or willing to inform her of, and sometimes—with her calm, profound and beautiful countenance turned full upon him, she would suddenly frighten him out of his senses by asking him some startling question about his pre-existence.

As the winter morning twilight of her lonely and loveless infancy passed off, however, the musing girl left off asking vain questions, and her reveries were filled with the present, or her thoughts projected themselves into the future.

She became very observant of all things around her. The face of nature with its infinite variety, forests, fields and flowers—waters, clouds and clear ether—day and night, light and darkness, sun and stars were deep unfathomable mysteries to her—mysteries she never, never grew weary of diving into.

LIFE was the greatest mystery of all—what was it? whither tended it? She accepted with awe all the Church had to teach her, but reached for something beyond. Great reverence she had for LIFE—great sympathy for all life that could SUFFER or ENJOY, however humble its form might be. In her lonely rambles on the sandy shores of the bay, she would stoop and pick up the little fish that might be stranded on the beach, and if its life was not extinct, return it to the water. In her solitary wanderings over the plains, or through the forest, she would remove the small caterpillar that might be crawling across the foot-path, lest some hasty foot should tread it to death. Even the drowning fly was not beneath her care. Nor was this altogether from benevolence—strange as it may be—it arose more from conscientiousness; and could the musing child have understood her feelings, and put them into words, she might have said: "All living things—all that can suffer and enjoy—and that are lower and weaker than ourselves, have a *right* to our care and protection—have a *right* to all the happiness that we have the power to give them. And as higher orders of beings, angels and archangels, minister to us—cherishing, protecting, defending us—so we should cherish, protect and care for the well-being of all that the Universal Father has entrusted to our mercy—as far as we have power and they have need. Shall I, whose slumbers an angel guards, not save a wounded bird from death?" Sometimes the chain of life was very distinct to her—and in those lonely moods of hers, by a sudden electric shock, she felt her connection with all the life above, and all the life below her.

Very unequally educated was Magdalene. In all that the society of other children might have taught her, she was profoundly ignorant. In all that the face of nature, solitude, self-communion could suggest, inspire, and teach, she was prematurely wise.

Very few people had the solitary child seen in all her life; and these could be summed up in a very few words—the assessor once a year would draw bridle at Blackthorn's gate—the clergyman in his pastoral rounds, would visit them about twice as often—and these, I think, were all—if we accept an occasional traveller, who would be landed from a packet at the beach, and journeying on foot across the plains, with his bundle swung on a stick over his shoulders, would meet Magdalene, and start with surprise and admiration at the sudden vision of dazzling loveliness in that wild place—and passing—turn again and again to gaze and wonder at the marvellous beauty of the lonely child.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST PRESENTIMENT.

What shall he be e'er night? Perchance a thing
O'er which the raven flaps her funeral wing.

Byron.

"Come! It's not twelve o'clock yet, quite! but you may all break off there, and go to see the man hanged!" sang out the sonorous voice of Adam Hawk over a field where some forty or fifty negroes were at work; and in a moment every implement of husbandry was thrown down, and a general shout of joy was raised by the temporarily released laborers.

"Stop that confounded howling and shrieking! It is the confusion of Babel! Bedlam itself let loose, would be more reasonable! Hark! do you hear me, lunatics! STOP! I say, or *I* shall stop the holiday! Are we in Pandemonium?" clanged out the same harsh iron tones, as the negroes with a great noise gathered up again

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their farming implements, preparatory to scattering themselves.

When all had left the field, except Gulliver Goblin, the overseer turned to him and said,

"You, also, are at liberty to go and see the spectacle, Gulliver! Go! it may do you good! I should not have permitted those idiots to leave their work, had it not been that I hoped the ceremony would have a good effect upon them—that they would see that the way of the transgressor is hard! Why do you stand waiting? Go! it will interest you—especially as the culprit is a negro."

"Thanky, sur! I wouldn't go to see a *white* man hung, to-day—let alone a colored gentleman—nigger-*roe*, as you call him!"

"Why, sir?"

"Caze, in-*first*-us; I'm not morally swayed in my mind, of the sobriety of executionizing a gentleman by the neck, for borrowing another man's sheep!"

"*Why?* if one may crave your worship's reason!" sneered Adam Hawk.

"If *your* honor's worship had about eleventeen hours ledger, I could confuse your min' by a 'liverin' of my 'ration on caputating bunishment and de melodious opprobrium of another man's property."

"Your, WHAT?"

"My 'ration, sir, on moral 'suading and carnal weepons; my lecter, sir, on capitating bunishment, sir, improvided to be 'livered 'fore a journeyed meetin' o' de colored poplin of this legion of contry for the debolishment of gallowses, an' the 'vention of bunishment in gineral White poplin, sir, 'vited to 'tend—we sees no difference in color, sir. The meetin' to be heldin' this arternoon, at the glade of the Old Turnpike Road!"

"The site of two assassinations! a very proper place to preach the abolishment of the scaffold from!" growled Adam Hawk, with a sardonic grin, as he turned from the spot.

"Hyena! I'll put you on the banjo, this very night, long o' the jack ketch and the governor!" growled Gulliver; and as this was the most sanguinary form his vengeance ever took, I suppose it was perfectly satisfactory.

"Father," said Magdalene, "where are all the people going?"

"They are going to St. Leonard's, to see the man hanged!"

"May I go, too?" asked Magdalene, without the slightest idea of what she asked for.

"No," was the curt reply of Adam Hawk.

"But I want to go very much."

"I have once said NO! I mean it."

"But I never saw a man hanged!"

"That is no matter for you?"

"What is it like?"

"It is none of your business."

"But *why* must I not go to see the man hanged, when every body else on the plantation has gone?"

"BECAUSE I WILL IT."

"But *I* WILL to go!" persisted the persevering child.

Adam Hawk looked at her a moment, half in affection, half in severity, and said, sternly,

"See here, Magdalene! When I have once said NO—you are to accept *that*—and once for all, let me tell you, that I will have you give up that bad habit of persistence; do you hear and heed me?"

"Yes, father."

"Magdalene!" said he, calling to her, as she was turning thoughtfully away. "Magdalene! when Satan once puts anything into your head, an angel of the Lord couldn't get it out; now I see that hard head of yours, is set on going to see the performance. Now I repeat to you emphatically—you are not to go!"

"I will not go, sir;" replied Magdalene, gravely.

"If you do! *I will punish you with severity*," concluded the well-meaning but mistaken man. And at the degrading threat, the bright countenance of the beautiful child changed—grew overcast and darkened; and she turned silently and moodily away.

It was a brilliant day—and as she walked on over the plains, crushing the slightly frosted ground under her feet, she encountered Gulliver Goblin. She looked up at him—and the inexplicable expression of her countenance drew from him—though it was a rare thing for him to address her—the inquiry,

"What is the matter, little mistress?"

"I am hurt," replied the child; and perhaps nothing but her deeply humiliated feelings would have drawn from her that admission—a condescension that immediately emboldened Gulliver to say,

"Hurt, Miss Madge! I reckon how you'd be more hurt, if you was gwine for to be hanged this present hour."

"That is what I have been wondering about this morning. I never saw such a fuss among people, since the Governor was elected, and had a dinner given him at St. Leonard's—and it is because a man is going to be publicly hanged. Is it good or bad to be hanged?"

"Marster save your mortal soul, Miss Madge!"

"Well! why don't you tell me."

"The Lord help your heart! sometimes you makes objurgations as makes my hair bristle right for sheer scare—and sometimes you axes such simple questions, as a natural-born idiot ninny-hammer would know better nor to ax! Is hanging good or bad! I 'vises you to try the impediment, an' fin' out for yourself," said Gulliver, looking at her with a sort of gingerly compassion.

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"Tell me all about it," said Magdalene.

"I'm a gwine to," replied the Goblin, taking the child by the hand and leading her up the hill to the deserted mansion. He stopped in front of the lawn gate to recover breath, and then pointing to the top of the hall, he said, "I am gwine for to take you up to the top of that there high house like Sam did Marster in the Bible, and show you something."

Magdalene had never been within the enclosure, and she now looked with great interest at the house. Goblin drew a key from his pocket, unlocked the gate and passed in, approached the front of the house, and admitting himself by a side door, took the child up a narrow spiral staircase that carried them up to the terrace walk on the roof of the house. Magdalene had never been up here before, of course, and had never seen the land and water from so high a point of view. She turned with almost breathless delight to look at the PROSPECT whose simple grandeur gave a name to Hall, Hill and Plains.

It was a brilliant day in early spring. Before her descended the great green hill gradually sweeping into the vast green plains stretching miles and miles to the dark blue waters of Chesapeake Bay, falling away and away until they were lost to sight in the convex form of the earth itself. Behind her arose the grand forest, rolling off and off—a boundless ocean of foliage until it disappeared in the far off distant horizon. These were the grand and simple features of the landscape. A magnificent PROSPECT indeed!

While Magdalene, almost forgetful of the subject upon which her thoughts had concentrated themselves the whole morning—gazed with admiration approaching to awe upon this boundless outspread of land and water, and murmured to herself—

"Now I see for myself that the great Earth is round, and feel that it is indeed an immense heavenly body whirling with inconceivable velocity through space! even as Mr. Hervey says!"

"Now she's at her witchified incanterations again!—and I sich a cussed infunnelly ole fool as fur to trus' myself on top o' the house 'long o' her! In the name o' the prophets an' off the 'postles, an' off the holy angels!—amen! Miss Madgie, I say! leave off looking that way an' talking to yourself—or to Sam, and tend to what I'm gwine for to say to you."

"Well, Uncle Gulliver, I am listening."

"Honey, look down at that there road, and see how full o' people it is," said the Goblin, pointing to where the road stretched like a yellow thread to the town of St. Leonard's, which lay like a bright mosaic gem on the green plains. "You can't see the gallows, but I'll tell you about it," said the Goblin, and as he took a ghastly pleasure in such subjects, he sat down upon the narrow bench that ran within the parapet, and inviting Magdalene to do likewise, he composed himself, cleared his throat, and commencing, gave the child the whole loathsome story of an execution he had once witnessed—with all its soul-sickening details—one circumstance of great horror—of how the rope broke and the criminal fell, and was picked up and dragged, mangled and bloody, blinded and maddened, back to the scaffold. Magdalene listened apparently unmoved, her cheek retained its rich crimson tint, and her large, dark, thoughtful eyes were not once withdrawn from the grotesque face of the old negro which became perfectly demoniac with the antics of feeling as he told the story. After he was done her eyes remained fixed upon him with the same thoughtful, profoundly thoughtful expression, until he said, "Now! would you like to go and see the execution? If you run fast you'll be in time! they won't fetch him out for half an hour yet. I thought you might o' seen it from the top o' this house, but you can't a cause the gallows is on the other side o' the town. Why don't you answer of me, Miss Madgie, and don't keep on o' boring o' holes through my head with your eyes—it kind o' puts a scare on top o' me, 'deed it do! Come! I'll take you to see the hanging ef you want to go."

"I would not see it for ten thousand worlds like this! I would not see it for ten thousand heavens like heaven!"

"I thought you 'sired very much for to witness the solemnification."

"I didn't know what it was! I did not know they hanged living men like bacon, you see! I thought the word hang might have two opposite meanings like—like—*pray*, you know—there is *pray*—to heaven!—and *prey*—upon a kid or a lamb."

"Now!" said the Goblin, looking at the sun with the air of a seer, "Now it is twelve o'clock—now if you want to re-al*ly* the thing you may 'maginate it all out, and almost see it with your eyes—jest this minnit they are taking of him up the steps o' the scaffold!—stop! now I'll tell you to a minnit when they fixes the rope."

Before he got any further, Magdalene had sprung, bounded from his side, and fled precipitately down the stairs.

Goblin gazed after her half bewildered, half relieved by her sudden flight, and when he found his voice, he said,

"Ef she ain't gone to see the executionizing arter all, sell me to Georgy! The hardest, hardest little devil I ever saw in all the days of my life! She heern me tell all 'bout that rope breakin', and all that bloody ghastly story, and her red cheeks never turned! It's Injun blood, or it's Sam!" and the old man rising left the terrace.

Meeting the overseer by chance, he threw that

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worthy into great wrath by telling him that Magdalene had gone to see the execution.

Yes! she had heard with unshaken nerves and unfading cheek. Nerves of the strength and elasticity of tempered steel, muscles of marble hardness and firmness, gave little outward evidence of the strong mental agony—mysterious agony, far greater than the occasion called for—that shook almost her reason from its centre. Now it seemed to her that some spirit of evil had moved upon the waters of her soul, and its vague vapors and mists had separated and settled into something substantial, and clearly defined as horrible. Yes! the one monstrous—the one atrocious evil in the world, was—the legal SCAFFOLD!

Pursued by this terrible idea, she fled up the hill at the back of the mansion, and plunged into the depths of the forest. It was strange—passing strange!—one of the unfathomable mysteries of life, that among all the terrors of the "night side" of nature, *this* only should have caused her heart to quail to its very core.

Often, often in after years, the woman recalled this first terrible presentiment of the child, and concentrating all her reasoning powers upon the fact, sought vainly to account for it. Now the child sought in the darkest shades of the forest, a refuge from the horrible phantom of her mind. She wandered all that bright spring day, but saw no brightness in it—all nature was awake with new life, but to her, in her then mood, the faintness of death was in all things.

She wandered on and on, until the shades of evening were stealing over the plains; then she turned her slow steps towards home—her mind still absorbed in the one horrible idea—now so agonizing in its intensity, that it seemed to affect her reason. She felt a sort of maniac impulse to fly to the scene of the loathsome tragedy—she feared falling into the power of some fiend that should impel her to a crime that should place her—THERE!

It was in this mood of mind, while returning down the wooded hill towards the plains through the very Old Turnpike Road we have mentioned so often, that she met Mr. Hervey, the preacher, on his return from St. Leonard's, whither he had gone to give the last consolations of religion to the condemned, (the reader will remember that Mr. Hervey's home was at the parsonage of the old Forest Church.)

"You are out late alone, little girl," said the preacher, stopping his horse, when he saw the beautiful child standing in the road before him. "Where have you been, little one, and where are you going now?" he inquired.

She did not reply, preoccupied with her strange, gloomy thoughts, perhaps she did not understand or hear. Looking at her now with more attention, and seeing the strange, deep gloom upon the young child's face, he said,

"Why, what is amiss at your house, Magdalene?"

"I wish I were dead, Mr. Hervey!"

"You wish you were dead! I am afraid you have been very naughty, and got into trouble, little girl! At least that is a very naughty wish!"

"You said, yourself, when General Wolfe's grandson died, that it was a blessing when children were taken to Heaven in their sinless infancy!"

"I said that, little girl, but you are not to wish it; and I am very much afraid now, that you are very, very far from being a sinless child! Madge! you have been naughty, and are afraid to go home! Come, let me lift you up before me and take you home," said the preacher, stopping and reaching down his arms for the child.

Magdalene, for a reason of her own, accepted his offer, and he set her up before him, and, turning again his horse's head, rode towards the plains. As they went along slowly, the preacher once more sought to gain the child's confidence, and asked her what she had been doing wrong.

"Nothing, indeed, that I know of, sir; but I am very unhappy!"

"Unhappy, Magdalene?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why are you so?"

"How old might a little girl be before she could kill anybody and be hanged for it?"

"MONSTROUS THOUGHT! what puts such horrors into your head, my child?"

"What happened to-day did, sir—please tell me how old a little girl might be before she could take any one's life and die for it?"

"Magdalene, you revolt me!"

"Please answer my question, sir."

"Child, you are crazy!"

"Am I then, sir?"

"Indeed, I almost think so!"

"Can crazy people be hanged, sir!"

"Again! what pertinacity!—no, crazy people cannot suffer capital punishment!"

"Can *children*, sir?"

"Magdalene! such questions are horrible, and such thoughts, I think, are even wicked for a little girl like you! No, then, children cannot suffer so!"

"Then I pray to God that I may die while I am a child!" said the little girl, clasping her hands together, and raising her splendid eyes to heaven, with such a fervor of supplication, that the minister looked at her, divided between surprise, admiration and amusement.

"Why, thou strangest of all beautiful witches! Magdalene! do you suppose that if you live to

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be a woman, you will ever be so wicked as to take any one's life?"

"No, sir, I don't think so; but yet Satan might get the better of me, or else I might be *accused* of doing such a dreadful thing—or some one I dearly loved might! Oh, I hope, I hope I may die in peace!"

"Magdalene, I think that your young, susceptible and ardent imagination has been too deeply and painfully impressed and affected by what has happened to-day. Perhaps it will relieve you to hear what I have to tell you—the condemned criminal has been pardoned!"

"Pardoned!"

"Yes, Magdalene, pardoned on the scaffold—are you not glad?"

"I don't know—was he?"

"Thou strange child, yes!"

"I was thinking that if God had pardoned him first—that if he was ready to go to a better world, he had better have gone. I was thinking that after all he had gone through, he never could be happy in this world again—I shall never be, now that I know such things be."

"Magdalene, I must know you better—you are the queerest, yet the most interesting child I have ever met," said the minister, contemplating her with profound interest.

"Did you know my mother, sir?" inquired the child, seizing this opportunity of gaining information of her whose name

> Was banished from each tongue and ear
> Like words of wantonness or fear.

"Did you know my mother, sir?"

"Yes, Magdalene, but we will not speak of her now," replied the preacher, very gravely.

"Only one question, sir—in the month before I was born—was there any very horrible execution in this part of the country; and was my mother's mind very much affected by it that you know of?"

The clergyman here stopped his horse short, and taking the child by the shoulders, turned her around until she faced him. Then he gazed deeply into her profound and beautiful eyes for the space of a minute, before he said—

"My child—why—tell me why, you asked me that question?"

"Because I heard one of the nigger women say, once, that the quarter chimney caught fire a month before *her* child was born, and that the child is now more afraid of fire than anything else in the world. Now there is nothing on earth—no fire, nor water, nor storm—no wild horse, nor mad dog, nor wolf—nothing in life frightens me, and makes me ill, except an execution! Oh oh! I am afraid even to talk of it!"

"Magdalene!" said the minister, "you must be sent to school—'Satan finds some mischief yet for idle brains to do, as well as idle 'hands,'—and you must mix more with children, and less with old crones."

And the minister, privately resolving to speak to Adam Hawk upon the subject, restored Magdalene to her former position before him, and put his horse in motion.

It was nearly dark—there was no moon, and the sky was overcast with clouds, so that the minister, when he arrived at the gate of the grange, instead of going in, set Magdalene down, and promising to call during the week and see about that school business, turned his horse's head and rode rapidly away.

CHAPTER III.

INDIAN BLOOD.

> He gazed on her and she on him; 'twas strange
> How like they looked!—the expression was the same;
> Serenely savage, with a little change
> In the large dark eye's mutual darted flame
> For she, too, was as one who could avenge
> If cause should be—a lioness though tame,
> Her father's blood before her father's face
> Boiled up, and proved her truly of his race.
>
> *Byron.*

Magdalene entered the grange. In the keeping room, or "big room," or hall, as it was by different persons called, a great fire, which the cold spring night rendered necessary, was burning in the wide chimney, and lighting up the whole large room with blinding radiance. Not a soul was there. She passed into the adjoining room—the inner room which had been her grandmother's bed-chamber, and was now hers, and finding that some one's care had already let down the windows, and kindled a little fire on the hearth, she washed her face and hands and naked feet, and returned to the outer apartment, and after walking to the fire and warming her chilled limbs, and going to the corner cupboard and eating a piece of bread and meat, with a draught of home brewed beer—finding herself in solitude, determined to spend her evening, as she always did, upon the rare occasions of her having the house to herself. So, instead of taking her basket of cotton wool to pick, she went to the rude book shelf that contained the small library of the farm-house, and looked for something to read—among what, child as she was, she had already waded through many times. And with the exception of the Holy Bible, such books as they were for a little girl's study—Fox's Christian Martyrs, with all its horrible pictures, History of the Reign of Terror, History of the Spanish Inquisition, were mixed up with books on Farriery, Agriculture, Medicine, &c., &c., &c.; and through all, proper or improper, good, bad, or indifferent,

had the lonely, musing, and eager child waded. Her strong, voracious, and starving mind bolted every thing that came in its way. She now took down the History of the Spanish Inquisition, and sitting in the chimney corner, in the strong blaze of the fire-light, began to pour over its dark pages.

So deeply absorbed was she in this, that she did not hear the door open, and shut violently, or a heavy step approach her, until a strong hand fell hard upon her shoulder, grasping it roughly, and a stern voice exclaimed,

"So, mistress! you are here! Where have you been all day and all night, while I have been tramping through forest, field, and moor, in quest of you?"

Awakened roughly from a deep, deep dream, her spirit recalled from a far, far journey into the distance of time and space, Magdalene slowly lifted her long, languid lashes, and gazed vaguely at him with her shadowy eyes. He repeated the question in a louder tone, shaking her roughly and lifting her upon her feet—the book fell from her hands, and she stood there in a sort of calm bewilderment, still unprepared to reply to him. With a third and more violent shake, Adam Hawk brought Magdalene quite to her senses, and then slowly and sternly repeated his question,

"Where have you been all day and night?"

"Sitting on the terrace of Prospect Hall, or, wandering in the forest behind it."

"No where else?" asked Adam, frowning darkly.

"No, father, nowhere else—from the forest straight home," replied Magdalene, quietly.

"WHAT!—have you not been to St. Leonard's, to see the execution?"

"Father, you told me not to go, and I never disobeyed you in my life!"

"You have done it in this instance! Take care! Confess now that you have been at St. Leonard's."

"Father! I have been nowhere but to the places I told you!"

Adam Hawk drew up his lofty, dark form to its full height, folded his arms, and looked thunder at the child. Very ferocious looked Adam Hawk, with his tall, gaunt form, his dark, aquiline features, and the ten year's growth of grizzled hair and beard, hanging in unkempt elf locks down his cheeks and bosom—very ferocious in the best of humors and terrible in his wrath!

But he never was an object of terror to the undaunted child.

"Look up into my face, mistress!"

"I am looking at it!"

"Now, then, tell me that since you left me this morning, you have been nowhere but to the terrace of Prospect Hall, and the forest, and thence home."

"I am doing it! I am looking at you now, and I tell you that I have been nowhere since I left you this morning, except to the terrace of the hall, and the forest, and home!" said Magdalene, with unfaltering tone, and unflinching gaze.

"YOU LIE!" thundered Adam Hawk. Magdalene started and flushed crimson, as though smitten upon the brow, but she did not reply. She quickly composed herself, and cast down her eyes.

"Confess, instantly, that you have been to St. Leonard's, and that you have *lied* to conceal your fault and escape punishment!" commanded the father; but the child was silent, moveless. "Confess, instantly, or I will thrash you within an inch of your life, and until you *do!*"

But Magdalene never opened her compressed lips, or raised her downcast eyes. Something in the matchless beauty, purity, and patience of her air touched his heart, and perhaps deceived him, for he said, in a less harsh voice,

"Repent and confess, and I will forgive you!"

This softened tone succeeded better with Magdalene, for now raising her eyes to his face with a sort of sorrowful dignity, very strange and affecting in a child, she said,

"'Liars are not believed even when they speak the truth.' Lips accused of lying should close themselves forever. Until you trust me, I will be silent!"

"WHAT!" vociferated Adam Hawk, astounded and enraged at a resistance so unexpected and invincible, yet so calm; "WHAT!" he thundered, as underneath his darkening brow his hawk eyes started, seeming to grapple her form with a hook-like clutch. He who had been the awful, absolute master of his household for half a century, and never before met opposition—he whose wife and child had been greater slaves to his own will than any negro on the plantation—to be defied now by an infant, his grand-child! It was incredible! it was astounding! it was stupendous! the criminality of the thing was even lost in its marvellousness! Adam Hawk did not stop to consider that his first slave, his *wife*, had been of another race—that as for his *child*, traits of character are not reproduced in the second, but in the third generation, and that in his grand-child his infant SELF was opposed to him.—"WHAT!" he roared, and thrust out his talon hand, as though he would have seized the child, but withdrawing it suddenly, as though he feared to trust her form in his own grasp! He turned and strode away, and reaching a whip from a rack across which it lay, he approached her, shaking it sternly—"Come, mistress! We will see how long this vow of silence will be held! SPEAK! Confess that you have disobeyed me;

that you went to St. Leonard's, and that you have lied to conceal your fault, and escape punishment. Speak, minion! Confess, before this lash descends upon you."

Magdalene was unmoved. Magdalene was naturally firm as rock, and just now her enthusiasm had been kindled, by reading of the firmness and constancy of martyred virtue—and now in her outraged truth and integrity—the rack! the rack! would not have drawn one word from her lips. And now, furious with anger, Adam Hawk raised the lash that would assuredly have descended upon the shoulders of the proud and beautiful child, but that the door was suddenly burst open by the Goblin, who had evidently been eaves-dropping, and who now breaking in, caught the upraised arm of the enraged man, exclaiming,

"Ah! for Gor A'mighty's sake, marster, don't, don't. Try moral 'suading little longer, affore you result to carnal weepons as a, as a derned assault! (*dernier resort*)—try moral 'suading."

"There!" said Adam Hawk, lowering the whip. "There! there is one before whom you cannot persist in your lie, or your lying silence. Uncle Biggs saw you go, and gave me information."

Magdalene turned her large eyes slowly, inquiringly upon the Goblin, who said, in answer to that mute appeal—what, by the way, he really thought,

"Yes, honey, I seen you go, you *know* I did! You sprang off like a kittenamount! and away you went a-scattering down the steps as fast as you could go, soon as ever I told you how you might be in time. 'Deed 'fore my hebenly 'Deemer you did, chile! Now, don't 'ny; wield to moral 'suadin'!"

"Confess!" vociferated Adam Hawk. But Magdalene's large eyes were fixed upon the ground again, and her lips compressed together. 'CONFESS!" thundered Adam Hawk, elevating the lash! but the firm lips were motionless, not even the scorn corroding her young bosom curled them! "TAKE THIS, THEN!" and again the lash was whirled into the air, and would have descended with a sharp rasp upon the shoulders of the child, but that with a cry of mingled anguish and despair, and with the bound of a panther, she cleared the width of the room and sprang upon a table where she stood at bay! and no leopardes at bay could have looked more splendidly, terribly beautiful than that child as she stood there consuming with the fierce anguish of her impotent wrath and shame! as she stood there with the smouldering fire of the blood of a thousand Weerowancees flaming through her crimson cheeks and blazing eyes! Again the madman, for such Adam Hawk now was, rushed furiously upon her, when a loud knock at the door was followed by the instantaneous presence of Bruin, the Deformed, whose electric apprehension took in the whole scene at a glance.

"Brute! Demon! what were you about to do?" exclaimed he, seizing the whip from the hand of Adam, and whirling it away through the open window.

"I was about to chastise her for falsehood! How dare you interfere?" growled the old man, turning upon the dwarf.

"*Her*, for falsehood!" sneered Bruin, going up to the table and looking with enthusiasm at Magdalene. "*Her*—little Indian princess! *Her*, for falsehood! Adam Hawk, I have not seen her since she was a babe, but now looking at her, I tell you, Adam Hawk, that she never told a falsehood in her life! That she would not have lied to have saved your neck from the rope, and your soul from eternal perdition, even when she loved you—*as she will never love you again!*" said the dwarf, as he raised his arms, in a gingerly manner, however, as though he was about to take hold of a young catamount. But Magdalene's countenance softened—softened into that mellow and beautiful languor common to *her* face, and to the leopard's in repose, and she passed her arm around his neck and suffered him to lift her from the table.

"I will not be balked so! I will not be trampled upon in my own house!" muttered the old man, in the deep reverberating tones of retiring thunder, as his fury began to subside under the new impression that he *might* have been wrong. "I will not be balked so! If she has told a falsehood she shall be severely punished!"

"And what shall be done with *you* if you have wrongly abused her? hey? parents can do no wrong, I suppose!"

"Bruin! I—!"

"Tut, man! is this the way in which you receive an old comrade after a ten years' absence? But, no matter for me! I came to tell you that the brig Confidence has cast anchor below, and that Judge Washington, with his family, are on board! He has come to the main land with the intention of procuring better assistance in the education of his grand-daughter and heiress, Miss Washington, my island maiden! my Miranda, as I call her—I being Caliban at her service, and yours and everybody's!"

"Judge Washington below! This is sudden!" said Adam Hawk, thoughtfully.

"Ah! he has come upon you in an hour you wist not of! I hope he will find you watching! lamps filled and trimmed and burning!"

"I am prepared to render an account of my stewardship! Judge Washington below! Well, this is sudden! How is the Judge and the young lady?"

"The Judge is hale, and the young lady, my island queen, is—but did I not tell you that you are to gear up the carriage and drive down to the

beach immediately, and bring them up? They are to sleep here to-night—the mansion house being considered too damp and cold until it has been aired and warmed with fires a day or two."

"I would that I had known of his purposed arrival! I might have had the mansion house made comfortable for his reception," said Adam Hawk, thoughtfully.

"Oh, aye! and a great many other things in better readiness! But, courage, man! I know you do not grudge your hospitality to the master of the estate, and for the rest—why you know it is not the first time, by many hundreds, that Joseph Washington has eat and slept in this, that was his birth-place, and his residence for forty years. Come, hurry, friend Adam, hurry, gear up and go down for them, while I stir Goblin up and have supper got against they get here—have you no woman about the place?"

"No, I hate to have women about when I can do without the creeturs, but I will send one from the quarters as I go," said Adam Hawk, leaving the house.

"Go, Gulliver, and get together the best you can for your master's supper," said the dwarf; and as soon as Gulliver was gone, and he was alone with the child, he sat down and called her to him. Magdalene approached, and stood before him. He drew her between his knees, and laying his hands upon her shoulders, looked at her long and wistfully; she returning his searching gaze. And so the old deformed man and the beautiful child understood each other perfectly.

"You were very deeply moved just now, Magdalene?" said the dwarf.

"Yes—if he had struck me, I should have killed myself! I did not say it, or think it *then*, but the more I think of it now, the worse I think of it, and the surer I feel that if he had struck me, I should kill myself."

"I believe it! firmness, self-esteem, destructiveness, monstrous!" muttered the dwarf to himself—and then he added aloud—"Magdalene, you are not raging, but you have more malign feelings now towards your grandfather, than half an hour ago, when you openly defied him!"

"It is deeper down," said the child; "the more I think of it, the worse I hate it—and I cannot help thinking of it!"

"I know it! firmness, concentrativeness, immense!"

"But how did you know, that I would not tell a falsehood? It was true! I would not! no! not to save myself from being torn to pieces by wild beasts—not to save myself from being cast into the flames and burned alive to cinders, would I tell a falsehood, or do a single thing to make me feel *mean!*"

"Conscientiousness, self-esteem, inordinate," muttered the dwarf to himself, laying his hand upon her stately head.

"But how did *you*, whom I never remember to have seen before—*know* that I would not; while he who has brought me up from infancy, suspected me?"

"My child, from your head and face, as well as from your air and manner—though the latter, except in childhood, is not so sure a guide, as it can be assumed; but on the former, my child, on the face and head, the character is written as plainly, as clearly, and as truly, for those who can read the language, as the letter-press of a printed volume. Magdalene! you are a wonderfully beautiful child; and you will be an eminently beautiful woman—that is a great deal, but it is little to what I am about to say. Magdalene! you are a very bad and a very good child! you are endowed with strong passions, strong intellect, and a strong will! There is no medium course for you in life! an ignoble or a brilliant destiny will be yours! infamy or fame! disgrace or dominion, is written in letters of fire upon tablets of iron in your character! Were you a man, Magdalene, and in Europe, I should say a scaffold or a crown would complete your destiny! as it is, Magdalene, you will be a great criminal or an illustrious woman! Why do I talk to you so, my child? because I cannot help it! Magdalene, you appear unmoved by what I have said, but you are not so—it is your steel-like nerves. You partly understand me, little one!"

"Yes! my blood runs cold, and—hot! Tell me! tell me! how I may keep from being a bad—how I may become a good and great woman?"

"Ah! Magdalene! other agencies! other agencies! the soul is being educated for good or evil, far enough out of the sphere of my knowledge and influence—which is to destroy or perfect yours!"

They gazed at each other in silence—the dwarf profoundly studying the greatest soul for good or evil, that had ever fallen under his notice—the child trying to read in the eyes of the seer the mysteries of the future—and within the door stood one as profoundly studying them both, Gulliver Goblin, the whites of whose upturned eyes gleamed in the firelight as he muttered to himself—"Marster Jesus! as sartin as that child is a witch, that 'tother is a conjurer!"

Only for a moment remained they thus—when the sound of approaching footsteps and voices aroused them, and a couple of negro women, hastily summoned from the quarters, entered to set the table for supper.

"Now, my child," said the dwarf, releasing Magdalene, "you must go and prepare a nice bed-chamber for a little girl about your age and size. I suppose you have heard of the Judge's grand-child, Virginia?"

"Miss Washington, the great county heiress—

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she who will have the two largest estates on the Western shore, besides the island in the bay—she whom they call the little Island Princess—yes! all my life I have heard a great deal of her. She shall have my bed-room; it is the best in the house."

And Magdalene left him and went into the inner chamber to prepare it for the little guest. She kindled a bright fire—swept up the hearth neatly—painted it with the red-ochre from the swamps; then going to her press she took out the hoarded treasures of her chamber—the quilt of scarlet stars on a white ground, and the knotted white toilet-cover—both the work of her mother's fingers—and placed one upon the bed and the other upon the chest of drawers; and lastly, she went out into the hall, and laying her sacrilegious hands upon the hanging book-shelf, carried it with all its volumes—Farriery, Family Physician, Poultry Breeding, and all, into the chamber, and hung it up over the mantle-piece, as the crowning glory of the unaccustomed magnificence.

She had scarcely completed that, when the sound of many feet and many voices, summoned her to the outer room to see the newly arrived guests.

CHAPTER IV.

VIRGINIA.

A thing all lightness, life and glee
One of the shapes we seem
To meet in visions of the night,
And should they greet our waking sight
Imagine that we dream!

George Hill.

She is active, stirring, all fire,
Cannot rest, cannot tire—
To a stone she had given life!

Browning.

As Magdalene entered the hall by one door, the opposite door opened, admitting first an elderly gentleman, of stately appearance, clothed in complete black—and next a youth of some fifteen or sixteen years, of slender form, fair complexion, large, clear eyes and broad brow, shaded by waves of pale golden hair. He led by the hand a little girl, whose dazzling radiance of beauty seemed to flash upon the vision with the sudden splendor of a sun-burst.

Virginia Washington was a blonde of the most brilliant type. She, too, was tall and full formed for her age, and might rather have been taken for twelve than for ten years of age. Her complexion was of that snowy, frosty fairness only seen with brilliant ultra-marine blue eyes, and resplendent golden red hair—this last crowning feature of her glorious beauty—this splendid head of hair, after encircling her brow with a halo of light, fell in many luxurious spiral ringlets far below her waist. She stepped into the room, "like some glad creature of the air," with smiling lip and smiling eye, and only withheld from dancing forward by the restraining hand of the earnest-browed youth.

Adam Hawk entered last, and immediately set forward a large arm-chair for the Judge, while he also ordered supper to be served. The Judge seated himself with a weary, though stately air; and the youth led the maiden to a chair, and drew another for himself to her side. Magdalene stood shyly off for a moment, and then, after looking attentively at Virginia, she went up to her, and said, in a low voice,

"Miss Washington, I think I shall like you very much, but I am not sure yet. I am gladder to see you than I thought I should be. I have got my room fixed very nicely for you.—Will you come into it and take off your bonnet, while supper is bringing in?"

Virginia started when first spoken to, and looked at Magdalene with her intense, brilliant blue eyes brought full upon her—then holding out her hand, suddenly, impulsively, she said,

"And I don't *think* at all, but I *know*, that I like you very much—what is your name?"

"Magdalene Hawk!"

"I do not *think*, then, but I am quite sure that I like you very much, indeed, Magdalene. You are beautiful as the starlight nights on the ocean!"

"And you, Virginia, are lovely as the summer morning on the plains!"

"And I think that we are both two very clever girls, Magdalene! with the gift of admiring each other!" said Virginia, and then her silvery laugh rang out upon the air, shocking Adam Hawk's solemn home from its propriety; and springing quickly up, she said,

"Come! come! come! I'm ready!

"'Come! oh! come with me!'"

And thus singing and swinging her bonnet, she danced forward, preceded by Magdalene, into the bed-room. She had only time to take off her pelisse before they were called to supper.

Immediately after supper, as it was quite late, Judge Washington requested to be shown to his sleeping-room, and Adam Hawk, taking a lamp, preceded him and Joseph up-stairs. Magdalene lighted a taper, and attended Virginia to her chamber.

"I wish you would sleep in here with me, Magdalene. Where *are* you going to sleep?"

"On the settle in the hall."

"Oh, that will never do! I am afraid I have got your sleeping apartment, Magdalene. Yes, indeed! Now I look around it, it must be yours."

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"Yes, it is mine, but I hope you will be comfortable in it—don't mind me, I sleep soundly anywhere, generally,—often summer nights I have gone out through this other door that leads into the flower garden, and I have laid down in the dewy grass and have slept finely all night—the night air and the dew not hurting me any more than it hurts the plants or the cattle—as, indeed, why should it?—but *to-night*," added the child, as if speaking to herself, "to-night I could not sleep *anywhere*."

"Why, Magdalene? why could you not sleep anywhere to-night? You say that so sadly!—Are you like me with my faults of temper? have you flown into a passion, and hurt and wronged some one you love? Poor Magdalene! I know what that grief is! make friends with them again, Magdalene—that is the best way!"

"No, you mistake—I never wronged any one, even the smallest insect, in my life; and I never flew into a passion. But I have been wronged, and a *hate* is slowly, darkly tiding into my soul, like the great midnight tide, and I cannot resist it!"

Virginia seemed to bring the bright rays of her golden-fringed blue eyes into an intensely brilliant focus upon Magdalene's star-light face, and then she said,

"I do not quite understand you, Magdalene! But you are unhappy, and I am sorry for you.—You cannot sleep! *Pray!* 'God giveth His beloved *sleep*,' you know."

"God is a God of Vengeance! *He* will understand me!" said Magdalene.

"He is a God of Love!—He will forgive and pity—teach and redeem you, Magdalene. He does that for me every day."

"I have done no wrong—need no forgiveness—and ask no pity!"

"Will you tell me about it, Magdalene?" asked Virginia, gently, as she kneeled down to her travelling trunk to take out her night-dress.

"No, I did not intend to say anything—it escaped me! I will see you at rest, Miss Washington, and bid you good-night!"

"Oh, no! do not leave me! stay with me all night!—indeed you must; for if you go and lie on the settle, *I* shall not sleep at all."

"You need not be troubled for me, Miss Washington, I shall be very comfortable."

"Magdalene!" said she, caressingly, "*do* stay with me; in a strange room I feel somehow afraid to stay alone, besides, I want to talk to you a great deal."

"I will stay with you, then, Miss Washington."

"Call me Virginia."

"Virginia, then—I will stay with you, and I think that I shall even prefer it, for I feel as if I should love you, Virginia!" said Magdalene, gravely.

But at this, Virginia laughed aloud, and throwing her arms around Magdalene's neck, impetuously hugged her, until all her resplendent red ringlets swept around our gipsy child, enveloping her as in a flame, crowing—

"Oh, you Magdalene!—you star-bright Magdalene!—yes! still and bright! high and solemn as the stars! You are coming on to love me, slowly, darkly, coldly, as the night comes on to love the earth—and you tell me so, Indian princess! with such an owl-like gravity! Now when *I* tell any one I love them, I *sing* it into them!—dance it at them!—let it loose in a rain of sunbeams around them!—rattle it in a hail-storm upon them!—shower it in a deluge of meteors about them!—batter them with it!—bombard them with it!—dazzle, bewilder, confound and terrify them with it! Oh! I'm a galvanic battery to those I love! Take care of me!" All this time she was hugging Magdalene spasmodically with her arms, at the same time that she was dancing frantically with her feet, convulsed as it were, with the very exuberance and wantonness of life, fun, and frolic. "Magdalene!" she said, at last, "you are the first girl I ever met with, and I love you so dearly."

"You are also the first girl I ever met with, and, Virginia, I feel that I shall love you very much!" said Magdalene, quietly, and without returning her fervent caresses.

"The future tense! always the future tense, thou far-seeing little priestess!" laughed Virginia, gathering her flashing ringlets, and crowding them into a little lace cap.

When the little girls were in bed, and Virginia had thrown her arms around the neck of Magdalene and dropped her head upon her bosom—she whispered—

"Are you sleepy, Magdalene?"

"No, I told you that I could not sleep to-night."

"Neither can *I*—everything seems so strange and charming! Well; then, Magdalene, we will talk—do you know that this is not the first time that we have slept together?"

"No!" said Magdalene, with serene surprise, "I did not know it!"

"Really! but did you not know that we had been foster sisters?"

"Had been—*what?*"

"That you and I had been nursed at the same bosom, and slept in the same cradle for the first six months of our lives?—that is to say, until our mother went to Heaven!'

"No, I knew nothing of all this—it is all strange and new to me—I never thought we had met before—I only knew we were both orphans."

Virginia then began, and told her all she knew, from *hearsay*, of their mutual history, and this only dated from the day of Magdalene's

adoption by Mary Washington. In conclusion, she said—

"Magdalene, they tell me that I did not cry when our mother went to Heaven, because I did not know it; but that when you—from whom I had never been parted an hour, sleeping or waking—when *you* were taken from me—that then I stormed like a young hurricane—while *you* who were not like me, fire and tow—*you*, patient child, and slow to anger, suffered yourself to be carried off without a murmur. Well, then, Magdalene, they tell me that my brother was brought in—not my own, but my adopted brother Joseph, and that he only could quiet me. I believe *that!* Oh! Magdalene! that brother of mine!—that brother Joseph!—our angel-mother had such faith in him, child as he was, that she begged grandfather never to part us until we grew up, and our road in life divided of itself. Well, Magdalene, they say that the first night I slept alone, I awoke in the night, hungry and cold—for the night was chilly—and that I cried a long time without waking Aunt Polly Pepper, who was fatigued, and slept soundly—but that little Josey was lying awake and heard me weeping, and came down and gave me the milk that sat there for me to drink, and then lay down in the cradle by me, and patted me to sleep, and that so we were found in the morning, both asleep.—So used was I to you, Magdalene, that I could not sleep without a little child—it was a habit of affection, and so after that grandfather would not let Josey and I be separated, and we slept in the same crib until I was three years old. That brother of mine, Magdalene!—oh, he is so good! so good! so faithful to rebuke my faults, yet so patient to bear with them, and so loving to forgive them! Every one else spoiled me. I should have been a very bad girl had it not been for Josey always with me. Very wilful I am, anyhow! I know I am, but very much worse I should have been but for him. Grandfather is the best and wisest man I ever knew, or heard, or read of—but he was not always with me as Joseph was, and he did not always *feel* with me as Joseph did. It seemed to me then that Josey was God's child, and now it seems to me that he is the Lord's beloved disciple! Yes, I have great faults, Magdalene! great faults! but if anybody can lead me to the Lord, it will be Joseph!" Virginia paused for a while as if she had fallen into a short reverie—then she said: "And now, Magdalene, though you have scarcely ever heard of me—except as the fortunate inheritor of all this great plantation—though you have never certainly heard of our former relation, yet I have not been suffered to forget you; Bruin has kept you in my memory. I longed to see you, Magdalene; and now that I do see you, I like you — and it seems so natural to be with you here. You do not answer me, Magdalene. You are in a study. Of what are you thinking?"

Magdalene had indeed been all this time with her head within Virginia's arms, quite still and silent. Now she answered calmly,

"I am thinking of my father; I cannot long think of anything else. Do not please ask me any more about my thoughts."

And she was, with a feeling of bitter pain, strange as new, to her young heart. And long after her restless and excitable little bed-fellow had fatigued herself to sleep, Magdalene lay awake, suffering the slow but sure and bitter antipathy to fill her heart—while her thoughts concentrated themselves upon the subject—while her soul sat in judgment upon her only moral guide. This was terrible, and terrible was its effect upon the moral character of the child.

Early in the morning, Virginia jumped out of bed—and, after washing, as she stood in the morning sunshine that streamed through the window, her joyous expression, her dazzling complexion, her splendid red hair, flashing, scintillating in the rays of the sun, never had Magdalene seen so bright a human thing—so full of life and light!

"I am up, you see, Magdalene! I am so impatient to see all over this old house—this house where my forefathers have lived for more than two hundred years. You must show me all over it, Magdalene." And so she rattled on, as she hastily dressed herself in a light blue silk dress—which by chance—for Virginia was innocent of the arts of the toilet—brought out her hair and complexion radiantly. The first thing that caught her quick glance, was the book-shelf. She tumbled over all the books with great curiosity, and then turning to Magdalene, inquired where hers were.

Magdalene replied that those were all she ever had had to read—that they had been left there by the Judge, as she had heard, for the use of the overseer.

"And very good books for the overseer—there are farming, gardening, grazing, and stock raising; and some of these histories—except that they are very sanguinary—are good enough for anybody. But, Magdalene, you do not say that you have read *these!*"

"Yes, all of them. I have had no others to read. And as for the sanguinary histories, I like them very much. I am a little girl, but when I read of the martyrdoms, I know that I also could clench my teeth and hands, and suffer to be flayed alive, before I would do—"

"Anything wrong?"

"Anything I did not want to do."

"I wish it was so with me, but I am timid except when my Norse blood is up, and then I am violent, though my excitement is like a blaze of straws, soon gone. Ah, me, I wish I *had* strength and courage and self-command!"

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"I have *those*, but, I wish I had the power of forgetting and forgiving!"

"Some one has wronged you, Magdalene, and you do not wish to tell me, and I will not ask you who it is—but this I will say, that if every one *I* am sometimes unjust or unkind to, treasured it up against me, I should be very unhappy and altogether discouraged from trying to be good. Now I am going to tell you something pleasant to put all gloomy feelings away!" added the child, suddenly changing her grave tone to one of cheerfulness—"Oh, Magdalene! I shall have such pleasure in introducing you to my books, the Arabian Nights, and oh! the book I have lately begun to like—by the unknown author of Waverley. Yes, Magdalene! you shall some day go with me to my island home, my little kingdom, of which I am the solitary little queen, and I will show you my little palace of white free stone, and my library, and my garden—my ocean isle, where Joseph says that father, I, and Bruin live like Prospero, Miranda and Caliban—only I am a very naughty little Miranda, and Bruin is a very amiable Caliban."

As they were now both dressed, the girls went out into the hall, where the breakfast-table was set, and where the family and visitors had already gathered. As Virginia made her appearance, Joseph arose from his seat, and approaching her with an expression of ineffable tenderness and affection beaming from his serenely beautiful face, took her hand, pressed it, and led her to a seat near the fire, which the chilly morning rendered necessary.

Judge Washington called Magdalene to him, and when he had held her hand and looked into her face a while, he said—with an expression not entirely of approbation—"There is a great deal of your grandfather in you, my child!"

Immediately after breakfast, Judge Washington, attended by Adam Hawk, went out to take a survey of his plantation. Bruin and Joseph left the house together to attend to the transfer of baggage from the packet to the mansion-house, which was now open and undergoing the process of being aired, cleaned, etc., for the reception of the family. During their absence, Magdalene took Virginia, at her request, all through the old farm-house, and over the garden.

That night Judge Washington's family were re-established at Prospect Hall.

CHAPTER V.

A grief without a pang—void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, shadowy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet—no relief
In word, or sigh, or tear. *S. T. Coleridge.*

Not quite eleven years old, yet developed as only neglect, suffering, solitude and thought, varied only by the society and conversation of the old, *can* develope a child's nature, was Magdalene. Her sense of justice—that stern justice natural to her own mind, and cultivated to the utmost by her father—revolted against the wrong that had been done her. A child of *quicker* sensibilities, a child like Virginia, might have felt the injury more keenly at first, but would also have got over it soon. Not so Magdalene! Very slow was she to receive any great impression, but *once made*, it was indelible—and time did but deepen and indurate the lines. Thus that night, after the departure of their guests, when her grandfather returned from the last supervision of the fields, she had scarcely a word or a look to bestow on him, and her own appearance and deportment was sorrowful as grave. After supper, when they were gathered around the fire, Adam Hawk in his big arm-chair, with his candle-stand and Bible by his side, Magdalene, with her basket of seed-cotton to pick, and Goblin, making acute angels of his legs and arms by squatting on his haunches, with his elbows on his knees, and his chin propped upon his hands—Adam Hawk, laying his hand upon the Bible, preparatory to opening it, and looking over his spectacles, said,

"Come hither, child, to me."

Magdalene dropped her bunch of cotton into the basket, crossed the hearth, and stood before him with folded hands and downcast eyes.

"Magdalene," said Adam Hawk, "I have seen Mr. Hervey to-night; I met him on his way to the mansion house, whither he was going to welcome Judge Washington home. He tells me, Magdalene, that you *were* really—not at St. Leonard's, but in the old forest, yesterday; so that Gulliver was mistaken, and he led me into a mistake. I am sorry, Magdalene, that such was the case!"

"I, too, am sorry—*very* sorry."

"I am glad, however, Magdalene, that you are a better girl than I thought you—are *you* not glad?"

"No, sir; for if the minister hadn't told you, you never would have believed me. No, sir; I am not so good a girl as you think me. I never shall be so good a girl again, as I was before yesterday."

"What do you mean by *that*, mistress?"

"Nothing, only not to deceive you, for I will neither speak nor act a lie."

"Then if you deliberately propose to be wicked, you know the consequences!"

"I do not propose anything, father; but I can not help growing wicked now, any more than the iron on the anvil could help becoming a hatchet blade, when it was heated and hammered into that shape by the blacksmith."

"We'll see!" quoth Adam Hawk.

"Marster Jesus!" ejaculated Gulliver.

Days passed, during which Magdalene saw no more of the family at Prospect Hall, except by such glimpses as she got of them at a distance. Still, everything about the new life at the mansion house, interested her extremely. For hours she would sit at the vine-shaded window—the same window through which her poor mother had gazed the night of her death—and watch the grand company that came and went in their fine carriages, or on their fine horses; she would notice the elegant dresses of the ladies, and the gay apparel of their servants; and all this seemed very magnificent to the unaccustomed eyes of the simple child. She would see the handsome family carriage, with its splendid pair of dappled grays, drawn up before the door of the mansion, and Virginia come out, looking radiant and joyous in her beautiful and costly dress; she would see the obsequious respect paid the beauty and the heiress by her attendants, and she would feel that the distance which divided her from her newly found foster sister widened every day. Yet no germ of envy took root in the child's heart. No; Magdalene, young as she was, had lost her peace, but it was from another cause; she had lost her confidence in, her repose in her grandfather, and she felt that she would never find it again until she had somehow justified him. Could her sense of JUSTICE have been satisfied at *any* expense, at her *own* expense even, she would have been comparatively happy. The idea weighed heavily upon her spirits—it became morbid—it might have ended in a monomania, but for a circumstance that saved her.

Bruin, the deformed, was a close and deeply interested observer of Magdalene. With his profound knowledge of human nature in general, and his intuitive insight into individual character, he had read Magdalene's heart clearly as an open book, printed in familiar characters, and understood it better than she did herself. Often he came back and forth from the mansion to the grange, and often joined Magdalene in her wanderings. One evening the dwarf had overtaken Magdalene on her return home from a ramble in the old forest. He joined her, and as they descended the hill towards the hollow of the grange, he pleaded fatigue, and sat down under a tree, drew her down to his side, and placing his hand upon the top of her head in his caressing, mesmerizing way, and looking out upon the plains, he said, in a tone of respectful pity,

"*Poor old man!*"

"Who?" asked Magdalene, in a soft voice, looking up, for her sympathies were slightly moved by his tone and manner.

"Poor, solitary old man!" said the dwarf, as if communing with himself.

"Who?" again asked Magdalene, with more interest.

"Adam! child, poor old Adam Hawk! who has outlived brethren and sisters, wife and child, and is now toiling on in his lonely, loveless, hopeless, old age, with nothing but the grave before him. Look, Magdalene! where he comes from his work—look at his stooping form, his gray hair, and his worn face!" said Bruin, pointing him out on the plains, while he gazed with all the benevolence of his soul into Magdalene's eyes.

He continued:

"See how weary and sad he is—how much good a word of affection—a little act of attention from one he loved, would do him now! It would refresh him more than his supper, and rest him more than his arm-chair—poor old man! he has not long to live! To think, Magdalene, that in all probability by the time that you grow up to be a vigorous young woman, *he* will be mouldering in his grave! and the opportunity of doing him good passed away from you forever."

Magdalene's eyes filled with tears as she looked on her grandfather and listened to the dwarf. He continued to gaze in her eyes after he had ceased to speak, and then she said,

"Oh, Bruin! you are very, very wise and good! take this sense of wrong inflicted out of my heart! that I may be able to love my grandfather again, and talk to him as before!"

"I cannot do it, my child, only you can do it!"

"How! how! I wish I could! I wish I could!"

"Wait on him as before—talk to him as before, and the sense of injury will depart of itself."

"But *that* would be deceitful!"

"No, my child, it will not be deceitful unless you do it to deceive, which you do not! My child, we must do our plain, literal duty without regard to our feelings, and *then* our feelings will go after it. When we know it to be our duty to forgive, and wish to forgive, yet cannot bring our hearts to it—let us resolutely do violence to our wrathful feelings and return good for evil, and we shall experience, to our surprise, that we are suddenly enabled to forgive without an effort. My child, it is a trait of human nature to love those to whom we do good, and to hate those to whom we do ill—therefore if you wish to love any one, begin by doing them good, and you will love them for the very good you have done them; and if you wish to avoid hating any one, do them no evil lest you hate them for the very evil you have done them. But, Magdalene, this does not throughout apply to your grandfather. Forgiveness is an inadmissible word between you and him. You owe him love, veneration, service! the first he may have lost—the last, my child, you must give him!"

"I will do as you say," said the child, and pressing the rough hand of the dwarf against her bosom, she rose up and left him, and walked

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rapidly on after her grandfather until she had overtaken him. "Give *me* the dinner basket! grandfather, you are tired and I am quite fresh, so let me carry it," said she, coming up to his side.

The old man looked at her in stern surprise, and then the harshness of his countenance softened as he said,

"No, no, it is too heavy for your young arms."

Heavy, grandfather! Let me try it! See here!" said she, lightly swinging the basket from one hand to the other with the utmost ease, and finally hanging it on her arm.

"God bless and redeem thee, Magdalene!" said Adam Hawk.

They went home together, and that evening and from that time the child exerted herself to please her grandfather—but, reader, the sense of injury was only numbed, it was not destroyed. In the evening when he would be returning home weary and bowed, wearing the look of old age, *then*, indeed, her heart would yearn towards him —but in the morning, when he would go forth to the fields vigorous and erect, the child would feel the sense of wrong done her returning again, and moody and musing she would wander forth upon the sea shore or up into the forest. In one of these rambles through the woods at the back of the mansion house she met Virginia.

It was a glorious morning in early spring. The air was soft and bright, and musical with the joyous songs of birds, the mellow lowing of cattle, the shrill crowing and cackling of cocks and hens, and all the jubilant reveille of aroused and exultant nature. And our Magdalene wandered forth, penetrated by the divine beauty of nature, before which her obscure moral pain had withdrawn itself like an evil thing into the deepest abysses of her soul.

She wandered up the old turnpike road, watching, not the intense blue sky, the fleecy, silvery clouds, the splendid sunlight shimmering on the brilliant green leaves; not these exclusively, but —the setting hen to her stolen nest; the bantam hen, that with seeming careless saunter, picking here and there, and ruffling her feathers, with the oblique eye watched her watcher with equal vigilance.

She approached the small open glade of the Old Turnpike Road—the glade which now in the dense dark forest, gleamed like a sunburst from the clouds—and in its strongest light was pictured a beautiful group: two equestrian figures, a youth and a child, each seated upon an elegant white Arabian; the youth wearing a suit of invisible green—the child a riding-dress of mazarine blue. On the left, with his hand upon the mane of the child's steed stood Bruin, the dwarf, and on the right, leaping up the side of the youth's horse, was a splendid jet-black Newfoundland dog.

On approaching this group, Magdalene's fugitive hen ran scampering off into the woods, and was lost to sight—while the girl herself paused, undecided between affection, pride and shyness, whether to meet Virginia or retreat.

Virginia settled the matter at once, by—as soon as she saw Magdalene—bounding to her side; followed at more leisure by Josey. "I am so very glad to see you, Magdalene! So very glad to see you!" said Ginnie, as she bent from her saddle to kiss her "sister."

While Joseph, dismounting, led his horse to her side, and lifting Magdalene, seated her as well as he could in his own place, saying, "I can walk on with Bruin—and Magdalene, if you are like Virginia, you can ride any sort of saddle, or even a bare-backed horse."

"Yes, I can, but I do not wish to take your seat."

"Never think of that—I prefer to walk with Bruin here; and—Ginnie! this arrangement pleases *you*, does it not?"

"Yes! oh, yes! Thank you, dear Josey, only walk by the side of Magdalene—her seat is not safe!"

When they were thus arranged—Bruin walking by the side of Virginia's horse, and Joseph by that of Magdalene—Virginia said,

"And now, dear Magdalene, I have something to say to you. I have not been at the hall a week without wanting to see you; but I have never been a strong child, and the weather has been soft and moist and enervating, and the hollow is very damp, so father would not let me go, but said that as soon as Miss Hervey arrives, *you* should be sent for to come and live with me, and be my sister, as mother wished. Now Miss Hervey is coming to-day—and father is gone down to the fields to ask Mr. Hawk to consent to let you come to the hall and share my studies. Now as Mr. Hervey approves of the plan highly, and says that we really need each other—that we will be correctives of each other, I suppose there will be not the least difficulty. Now, Magdalene, as you appeared to be only taking a woodland ramble, you might as well return with us to the hall, and wait the event there."

"I was only watching the setting hen to her nest," replied Magdalene.

"And she, with the cunning of her kind upon such occasions, has eluded or escaped you. I do not see her—so come!"

And so Virginia prevailed with Magdalene, and they returned together to the mansion house.

Ginnie hurried her off to her own chamber—her late mother's chamber with the "dawn window," which remained with the same blue da-

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mask curtains, and the same furniture generally —and after showing her everything that was interesting in it, opened the door leading into what *had* been the nursery, and told Magdalene that *that* should henceforth be *her* room as it connected with her own. Then she showed her across the broad middle passage into two corresponding rooms—the front one of which was to be the school-room, and the back one Miss Hervey's chamber.

By the time Ginnie had gone through these, the dinner-bell rang, and they went down into the dining-room to find there Judge Washington returned, in the company of Adam Hawk. The latter seemed surprised to find his grandchild there—until Ginnie quickly reading his thoughts, said—

"*I* brought her!"

Then he took Magdalene by the hand, and said—"My child, through the kindness of Judge Washington, you are to reside here as a companion to Miss Washington, sharing her studies. Go and thank your benefactor."

But Magdalene looked as if she would consider the subject first.

And the Judge smiling at Magdalene's hesitation, and Adam Hawk's dark frown, said, "Leave her to her honesty, Hawk!"

Ater dinner, Adam Hawk, with a parting admonition to his grand-daughter, went away. In the afternoon Magdalene's slender wardrobe and other little effects, were sent up from the grange, and placed in the room appropriated to her use.

Late in the evening, Miss Hervey, in charge of her father, arrived.

CHAPTER VI.

THE YOUNG GOVERNESS.

Her eyes were shadowy—full of thought and prayer—
And with long lashes o'er a white rose cheek,
Drooping in gloom—and, oh! the brow above:
So pale and pure; so formed for holy love
To gaze upon in silence—but she felt
That love was not for her, though hearts would melt
Where'er she moved, and reverence, mutely given,
Went with her; and low prayers, that called on Heaven. *Mrs. Hemans.*

The family were assembled in the wainscotted parlor. The crimson curtains were let down. The crimson sofa drawn up on the left side; the crimson rocking-chair on the right, and the black walnut reading-table in front of the bright fire that the cool evening made agreeable. Those were not the days of solar lamps, but a statuette of Faith, holding a light above her head, stood upon the table, illuminating the scene. Judge Washington sat in the easy-chair on the right, reading his paper. Joseph, with Magdalene and Virginia, occupied the sofa on the left, and were engaged in examining a book of prints. They were waiting tea for the arrival of Mr. and Miss Hervey.

At the time of our story, the schools and colleges of New England had not, from among the number of their pupils, flooded the whole South with a surfeit of tutors and governesses—*then* a tutor was a rare, and a governess an unheard of thing, in the Southern States. Therefore Judge Washington, unwilling to send his grand-daughter from home, had decided to entrust her to the care of Helen Hervey, and prevailed on the clergymen for that purpose, to part, for a season, with his youthful but accomplished daughter.

The family had not waited long, before the loud knocking at the hall door announced the arrival of Mr. and Miss Hervey, who were immediately ushered in.

Mr. Hervey was a gentleman of middle age, medium stature, dark complexion, and ardent and intellectual cast of countenance.

His daughter, Helen Hervey, was about sixteen years of age, of small but well proportioned figure, of sallow complexion, and hollow features, and might have been called plain, but for the large, black, brooding eyes—with their black eyelashes and eyebrows, and the clustering black hair, shading her dark, spiritual countenance, and giving it a singular charm, that might outrival even the brilliant glow of Magdalene's complexion, or the radiant bloom of Virginia's. Helen wore a closely-fitting, dark green dress, which threw out into greater relief, the singular style of her features and complexion.

The Judge arose to receive his guests, and with stately courtesy seated Miss Hervey in the easy-chair, before presenting his daughter and her young companion to her notice. When the introductions were over, supper was announced; and after supper, Mr. Hervey departed, and Miss Hervey was shown to the departments she was to occupy as school-room and chamber.

The grave, fervent, and beautiful countenance —the gentle voice, and easy manners of Helen Hervey, had made a very favorable impression upon the mind of Magdalene, and had won, at once, the heart of the ardent and susceptible Virginia.

The next morning, after breakfast, Judge Washington introduced Helen into her school room, and presenting her pupils to her, left them with her, while he and Joseph went out for the day.

Helen had evidently been well prepared in all respects by her father for the onerous du

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ties laid upon her youth. Her first object was to gain the confidence and affection of her pupils, and then to study their characters with a view to their improvement. Never had a young teacher two pupils of such totally opposite personal appearance, characters and circumstances, as Helen had in Magdalene and Virginia. Virginia, with her dazzling fairness, her sparkling blue eyes, her splendid red hair, her quick movements, and her ardent, impulsive feeling—Magdalene, with her rich and glowing crimson cheeks and lips, her jet black hair, and eyes, and eyebrows, her languid motions and her thoughtful air. Virginia, with her good and bad—her large veneration and benevolence—her affection, her docility, her patience, and above all, her trust and her humility on the one hand, and her hasty violence of temper and her timidity (both these faults perhaps arising from nervous irritability) on the other. Magdalene, with her truth, justice, courage, and self-command on the one side; and her pride, ambition, and stubbornness on the other. Virginia, the heiress of the two largest estates in the county; Magdalene, the penniless dependant on her father's bounty. Yet the principal virtue of Virginia was her humility, and her principal failing, a want of fortitude and self-command; while the great fault of Magdalene was inordinate pride, and her great virtue, invincible courage and self-control.

But a trifling incident that occurred in the course of the summer, will serve fully to illustrate the characters of the children. It was a very warm evening, and Helen Hervey had taken her pupils out into the shaded arbor. There already sat Judge Washington—smoking—don't be shocked—his pipe of tobacco. And there sat Joseph, with a volume of Moshiem in his hand. Ginnie sat down, but instead of studying the French grammar she held in her hand, she let it fall, and running into the house, returned with a basket, filled with cotton-wool, on which reposed two little young Guinea pigs, her new pets—presents from Midshipman Broke Shields, who had brought them from the Coast of Africa for her. Every one knows the extreme tenderness and delicacy, as well as the irascibility of these pretty little creatures. Ginnie, in her wilful manner, took one of them upon her lap, and began to play with and teaze it. The little creature at first only squealed and struggled, but Ginnie laughed and teazed it the more. Miss Hervey spoke to her, gently requesting her to desist; but Ginnie replied by giving her pet another squeeze and pinch. The little animal, in self-defence, suddenly turned, and struck its little sharp teeth into Ginnie's soft arm, inflicting a slight wound. Enraged with pain, Ginnie's face flushed up—she screamed, shook the little creature violently, and threw it heavily upon the ground. The little thing convulsed, rolled over, stiffened, and lay perfectly still, and in this time Ginnie had come to her senses, and Judge Washington, Miss Hervey, Joseph, and Magdalene had gathered around her, drawn by the scream. Virginia now stood with clasped hands and pale face, contemplating her work of destruction, with deep contrition.

"Oh, oh, oh, oh! I am so sorry!" she said, wringing her hands.

"How did this happen, Virginia?" inquired Miss Hervey.

"Oh, I was teazing him, you know, and he bit me, and I flew in a passion and threw him down and killed him! Oh, I am so sorry! Oh, I would give all the pretty things I have in the world to bring him to life again!"

"So you killed him, Virginia?" said Judge Washington, very gravely. Then turning to the others, he said,

"Magdalene, my love, tell this little girl what you think of this act of vengeance and destruction of hers—come, speak out your thought like a brave girl as you are."

"I think that it is tyrannical, cowardly, mean to take vengeance on anything weaker than ourselves!" replied Magdalene, looking straight in Virginia's face.

"Oh, I know it, Lena! I know it!" said the penitent and humbled child.

"Helen Hervey, my dear, give this little girl your thought upon the subject."

"I think that Virginia is very sorry that she has killed the little thing, when she reflects that though a little girl may take a life, yet that life, once taken, all the power of earth could not restore—and I think that Virginia will never give way to such fatal violence of temper again," said Helen Hervey, gently.

"Never again! oh, if the Lord will please to help me, *never* again!" said Ginnie, earnestly.

"Where is Joseph—I must have his opinion! Yes, my little girl, painful as it may be to you, you must hear the public sentiment upon these tempers. Where is Joseph?" asked Judge Washington.

But Joseph had taken the Guinea pig out some minutes before, in order to remove the painful object from the poor little penitent's sight, and he had not yet returned. But now he comes,—and bringing back the pet alive and kicking! Yes! he brought it back into the circle, and standing before the surprised and overjoyed child, he laid the tiny animal on the palm of one hand, while he stroked down its soft, spotted back with the other, and said,

"You see he was not dead, Virginia! He was only thrown into a fit!" and smilingly he laid it in the basket of cotton wool by the side of its sleeping sister. And Virginia, she looked around upon the circle for an instant, and then impetuously casting herself upon Josey's bosom, clasping

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her arms tightly around his neck, and pressing her head closely against his breast, she sobbed,

"Oh, my dear brother!—my dear, dear brother! My dear brother Josey! Other people scold and lecture me, and it is very proper, too! but *you* save, and restore, and turn all my wrongs into rights, without a word of reproach! Oh, my dear brother Josey, what should I do without you?—you are so good! so good!"

And this she said a score of times, while hugging Joseph tightly around the neck, and pressing her head upon his bosom, until Joseph gently disengaged her arms, put her from him, and turning, dashed the quick tears from his own eyes, and hurried from the arbor.

To improve the event of the evening, Judge Washington took Virginia by the hand and led her into the library, where he set before her the fatal evils of anger, in the most impressive manner—making her to know that the same passion that had raised her little hand against the feeble life of her pet, in its stronger development had armed Cain against his brother Abel's life.—Finally, he prayed with her before leaving the library. When they entered the wainscotted parlor, Ginnie went up to Joseph, and laying her two little hands softly upon his arm, leaned her head against him for an instant. It was *her* manner of expressing gratitude, confidence and dependence. He bowed his face over her bright hair a moment, and then leaving her, took up a book, and went to the other side of the table to read.

Years passed away. By the persevering and affectionate care of Judge Washington and Helen Hervey, Joseph, and even poor, deformed Bruin, the faults of Virginia's temper and temperament were gradually being corrected. They were so superficial, and outweighed by so many inherent virtues, that indeed they required nothing more than a loving persistence on the part of her educators to eradicate them. The evil of Magdalene's stern character lay deeper—more out of sight—nothing occurred to call it forth—therefore it was unsuspected, and again, therefore, uncorrected; while her good qualities, a calmness, patience, fortitude, courage, were very apparent. Do you cavil at "courage, fortitude" in a young country girl in domestic life? I will reply by a single instance. When our foster sisters were fourteen years of age, the healthy shores of the Chesapeake were visited by an epidemic and malignant fever, which laid waste many a plantation. Judge Washington's people suffered extremely from illness, and that there were no deaths among them, was mainly attributable to the intelligence, firmness and patience of Magdalene—who, with Virginia and Miss Hervey, had temporarily abandoned the school-room, and given herself up to the care of the sick. Poor Ginnie! the gleam of a lancet would make her flesh creep, and the trickle of blood would turn her ill to faintness; yet, not for these failings of the flesh would Judge Washington suffer Virginia to abandon her duties—no! for he decided to use this very opportunity, and these very means, to teach her self-control and fortitude, and while gently encouraging her, he firmly kept her to her task. But in the most frightful aspects of the fever, when Virginia would utterly fail, and even Helen Hervey turn sick to faintness, Magdalene's firm nerves and muscles would retain their immobility, and her ruby cheeks and lips their glow, and her soul its invincible courage.

Virginia admired Magdalene very much. "Oh, Magdalene! how I wish I were a soldier like you! For my part, much as I admire the chivalrous Buckingham and Prince Charles, I sympathize more with douce King James's dread of cold steel and red blood! By the way of a little sun-beam, Magdalene, when these dark days of sickness are quite over—as they are almost over, thank Heaven! shall we not have a nice time these Winter evenings, with the History of the Crusades, and the Waverly novels?"

The dark days of dire illness *were* over—their mission was accomplished to one strengthened and instructed spirit at least. The frost of Autumn came, bringing health—and then the Winter evenings came, with their fireside delights.

In their morning studies—their afternoon pastimes, and their evening light reading—the opposite characters of the foster sisters were still more plainly revealed. Botany, Geology, the beautiful and curious things of the earth, interested Virginia. Magdalene took no sort of pleasure in dissecting a flower, or classifying a stone—nay, she even disliked it. Flowers were beautiful things in form and color—and stones were beautiful also, with mere light and shade, and acknowledging this, she turned from them. Astronomy was her passion. In contemplating the infinite majesty of the Heavens, her soul was raised in a calm trance of ecstacy, that though it gave no outward sign of its being, reached almost the confines of an exalted insanity.

In their amusements, Virginia loved dancing, riding, foot-racing over the plains, battle-door and shuttle-cock, singing glees—everything, in short, that was active, sportive, vivacious.

Magdalene, delighted in the reading aloud, or declamation of epic poetry, the thunder of martial music, and the study of historic paintings of high heroic subjects. Virginia loved the green grass, flowers, birds, pets, and little children. Magdalene joyed in storms, rocks, the sea-shore, the starlight nights. Virginia loved all the people immediately around her. Magdalene adored all the glorious names that blazed upon the pages of history, and all the great souls of the living age. Their evening readings in the wainscotted

parlor, were very pleasant things. Judge Washington and Joseph were alternate readers, until Magdalene, by especial vocation, took it herself. In their reading and discussion of Shakspeare, Milton, and Scott, Magdalene would be silent after reading, until called upon to express herself, and then would startle the little circle by such high treason as this:—That Adam, Eve, and the Archangels, were well enough she supposed—that if they were extraordinary, she herself had not the genius to appreciate them—but that that which attracted her whole soul with mighty power, was his Satan! This would greatly shock Virginia, to whom Eve appeared the very model, the very ideal of womanly perfection. In reading Ivanhoe, in the same manner, when called upon—not before—Magdalene avowed her decided preference for Rebecca and Brian de Bois Guilbert, wishing that they had married and revolutionized some kingdom, as he dreamed. In Shakspeare, Virginia had taken the characters of Desdemona and Cordelia, and enthroned them in her mind on each side of Milton's Eve. Magdalene could neither understand nor feel the exquisite beauty of those creations—but rendered homage to the demoniac power of Richard III., and of Lady Macbeth. When questioned about the reason of these tastes, she would reply,

"I do not know—it is my nature, I suppose—but I feel my own affinity to the STRONG, and I admire strength, even wicked, more than the softness and delicacy that so resembles weakness!"

Thus the sisters did not sympathise entirely. Magdalene needed no sympathy—she could enjoy her stern tastes in solitude.

But Virginia needed companionship in all things—and one day she said, sorrowfully, "Ah! Lena! you hate all the beautiful things that I love!"

"Virginia!" replied Magdalene, who chanced then to be in one of her sublime moods; "Virginia, if I trample flowers under foot, it is not because I *hate* them—but because I see not where I tread—my eyes are caught up by the stars—or! if you will rather have it so!—by the tempestuous skies, the terrific beauty of the thunder and lightning.

CHAPTER VII.

MOTHER.

There's not a lovely transient thing,
But brings thee to our mind!
The rainbow or the fragile flower,
Sweet summer's fading joys,
The waning moon, the dying day,
The passing glories of the clouds,
The leaf that brightens as it falls,
The wild tones of the Æolian harp,
All tell some touching tale of thee;
There's not a tender, loving thing,
But brings thee to our mind! *Mrs. Follen*

As our young foster sisters approached womanhood, they became more serious and earnest, though from partially different causes. With Virginia this period of life was marked by the deepening and intensifying of all her social affections—her profound veneration of her only parent, her love for her foster sister, and lastly both veneration and love for her adopted brother—and by the arising of fervent religious aspirations.

To Magdalene this era brought no enlargement of the affections, social, or religious; but gave a great impetus and force to thought. Further than ever her mind projected itself into the past and the future, deeper than ever it dived beneath the surface of the present. Among myriads of thoughts, feelings, hopes, fears, anxieties, ambitions known only to her own soul, the predominant idea was—*her mother*. Virginia talked a great deal about *her* mother, talked of her mother's whole life with the familiarity of a cotemporary—and it was therefore evident that she had received very minute information from those around her—but Magdalene never heard of her mother. Never—with the single exception we have recorded—had the young girl made any inquiry of her. Something—perhaps the tacit influence of the wills of those around her—had repressed the questions she would have liked to ask. And, there was this trait of Magdalene's character—when once silenced upon any subject, it was her peculiarity to *continue* silent so far as that subject was concerned, and when once inquiring upon a topic to *continue* to investigate until she should be satisfied. The reader must have observed it before—it was what phrenologists call concentrativeness, *continuity*. So, Magdalene once interested in her mother's history, never lost a tithe of that interest, and once effectually silenced, *continued* so for years. She began to wonder and to speculate why it was that she was called by her mother's maiden name. This was a question full of bitterest sorrow to her. It wounded her filial love, it wounded her pride to the quick. Was she really that which sometimes some malignant negro in insolence had called her in her childhood? She

shuddered and would rather have died in infancy. She could scarcely forbear reproaching her parents in their graves. Her *parents*—who was the other one? She had not the remotest idea. One day she inquired of Helen Hervey.

"Helen, why is it that I am called by my mother's name?"

"I do not know, my love," replied Helen.

"Who was my father, Helen?"

"I do not know, my love!"

"One question more, Helen! Oh, Helen! reply to that question if you can!" and then with an unfaltering voice and an unfading cheek that revealed nothing of the trouble of the girl's heart, she inquired—"Were my parents married?"

"I do not know, Magdalene," said Helen Hervey, and drawing her pupil to her bosom, she kissed her affectionately, as the tears rose to her eyes.

Magdalene shed no tear. Then Helen said,

"Magdalene, my dear girl, do not mention this subject again to any one—will you?"

"I cannot promise that," said Magdalene, sadly.

"At least do not mention it to Virginia."

"Certainly, certainly not! I know that that which consumes the very heart of Magdalene Hawk must not reach the ear of Miss Washington, even in the echo of the faintest whisper!"

Magdalene soon after withdrew quietly from the room, and too troubled for society or conversation, left the house by the back way for a ramble up the Old Turnpike Road. She had not gone far before she came upon the Dwarf sitting under the spreading branches of a large walnut tree, and reading with profound attention a folio volume that lay upon his knee. Magdalene stopped, and the half-formed purpose of speaking to him of her parentage was instantly completed.

"Bruin, I am very glad to meet you this evening," she said.

He looked up, closed his book, and motioned her to sit by his side.

"If I disturb your studies, Bruin, I know that you will have the candor to say so."

"Certainly. You do not. It is getting too late in the evening to read. Besides, I wished to talk to you."

"Talk to me?"

"Yes, my dear, to talk to you of the subject that lies nearest your heart. Magdalene, no one watches you with so much interest, or reads you with so much clearness, or knows you with so much certainty as myself—and no one loves you better, for I knew and loved your mother, Magdalene!"

"You knew my mother?"

"And *loved* her, Magdalene, more than life!"

"And my mother! She deserved that love! I see by your face that she did."

"She merited the love, the veneration, the worship that I gave her, Magdalene!"

"Heaven bless you for saying that."

"You have heard Mary Washington's name lauded almost to canonization?"

"Yes."

"All that Mary Washington was, she owed to the teaching of your sainted grandmother, and the constant association and example of your angel mother!"

"Heaven bless you for saying that."

"I know it better than any one else, for I was with them all the time. Mary was by nature just such a child as Virginia now is, but through the blessing of God upon the influences I have named, she became the young saint whose image is now enshrined in every heart almost as an object of worship!"

"Heaven bless you for those words!" again said Magdalene; and this, fervently, earnestly, and yet half unconsciously, she repeated at every pause, as though her heart kept repeating it without her knowledge.

"Well, Magdalene, at that time Prospect Hall was not finished. The Judge and his son, what time they staid at home, had rooms at the grange, his birth-place, you know, but into which he had put your father. The Judge then, Magdalene, very soon became attached to Mary Carey, and while she was yet a little girl, before she had gone at all into the world, he wrote and solicited her hand from the Colonel, for his only son Joseph. Colonel Carey was not averse to the proposition, and as in a few years the young people were quite fond of each other, they were married. Prospect Hall was, in the meantime, ready for their reception. But now, Magdalene, comes that part of the story that most concerns yourself. Margaret, your mother, was by Mary's earnest entreaty, her first bridesmaid, and, in that capacity, accompanied her to the hall, and was thrown into all the wedding festivities of the neighborhood. Prospect Hall was filled with gay company for weeks, and indeed, until the awful tragedy, the murder of Captain Carey, dispersed them. Among the guests were the Mountjoys of Alta Bayou—the Brokes of Forest Hall—besides many distinguished visitors, friends of Col. Carey, from up the country. The first groomsman of Captain Washington was Victor, the youngest son of General Mountjoy. Well! in all the ridings, walkings, sittings, or dancings of the bridal—it, of course, according to the local custom, fell to the lot of Victor Mountjoy to escort, or attend, or dance with Margaret. Ah! Magdalene, you know the rest without my telling you. It is the stereotyped plot of all the love stories in the world. They loved each other. Victor was honorable. Margaret innocent. Victor confessed his love, and asked his father's consent to marry her. General Mountjoy com-

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manded him never to see Margaret again, on pain of his severest dipleasure. Victor, I am willing to think, was inclined to do his duty and obey this command—but then he had to go and tell Margaret—and in that interview his dutiful resolutions all melted away. He would have persuaded Margaret to marry him, at least I presume that this was so, for the end of the interview was, that Victor led Margaret into the grange, and asked her of her parents—in requital of which straightforward honesty, Adam Hawk ordered him out of the house, locked his daughter up, and abused his wife for not looking sharper after her. I was present then, and I know that from that time the life of the poor girl was made miserable by the well-meant but mistaken harshness of her father. She was grieving for her violent severance from Victor, for her enforced separation from her dear friend, Mary Washington, and left without the least sympathy. Her stern father would not permit her to visit Prospect Hall, lest she should be thrown into the society of 'some other puppy'—nor would he permit her mother to say one consoling word to her for fear of 'enervating the girl, and making her believe that she had something to cry for.' The end of all this was, Magdalene, that one night at prayer-time the maiden was missed from her place, and while Adam Hawk was beating up all the quarters of the plantation in search of her—*her* hand was resting in that of Victor's, and the minister was pronouncing over them the marriage benediction!"

"They *were* married!—they *were* married! Heaven's richest blessings on you for that intelligence! Why, then, do I not bear my father's name?"

"Listen! they *were* married, or thought they were. They went to Richmond. They lived there nearly a year, during which time Victor's pocket money, watch, etc., and at last his *credit*, came to an end. They sunk into extreme penury. Victor got employment wherever he could, rather than see his young wife starve or freeze. He haunted the steamboat wharf, and became porter whenever he could. But Victor was naturally of a delicate organization. Want, toil, sorrow, remorse wore away his health, and in less than twelve months after his ill-starred marriage, Victor Mountjoy (sad misnomer) lay upon his death-bed. He wrote to his father, General Mountjoy, saying that for himself he never should have dared to ask forgiveness—but that now, from his sick bed, he implored his mercy on his wife and child. In reply to this letter General Mountjoy wrote to him—informing him that his marriage was illegal—null and void—for that himself and the girl were minors, and had eloped against the commands of their parents. That if he would immediately break the discreditable connection, his family would suitably provide for the girl and her child, and open their doors for the return of their prodigal son. That until they were separated nothing should be done to alleviate the sufferings of either. The heaviest blow was the news that his marriage would not stand; that he should leave his wife and child, beggared, ruined, and without hope. Could he have left the State with Margaret, and legalized his union by a marriage in Maryland, he would have done it—but far from the boundary line, and prostrate upon a bed of illness, he was powerless. Death was on him—death, hastened by these sorrows—and the second day from the reception of that letter—he died. Yes! he died of hunger, cold, and his father's cruelty. A fortnight after that, Magdalene, at the dead of night, in the midst of a furious snow-storm—your mother reached her home to die!"

Again—nor frown of brow, nor flash of eye, nor motion of lip, nor change of color—betrayed the slow and sure coming of the deadly hatred with which her heart was filling full.

Again Bruin spoke—

"The judgment of Heaven seemed to fall upon General Mountjoy. Of four other tall and handsome sons, not one remains. Of several fine grand-children, only one puny boy!"

At this instant the breaking of twigs and dry leaves under a heavy tread, drew their attention, and in another moment the Goblin stood before them, saying—

"Gee-hoss-o'-fat, King of the Dews! ain't this a singular co-inference! Here have I been seeking of Mr. Bruin all over the plantation, an' jes 'bandoned the 'suit, when here I fin's the extinguish' gemman hisself, with the 'dentical skyentifick book, on the 'dentical road we wishes of him to travel! Good-evening to you, marster!"

"Well, Gulliver! what did you want of me—and above all things, where are all these people going?" inquired the dwarf, pointing to a group of negroes, who had passed them up the road.

"Yes, sir! yes! that's what I were gwine for to enumerate. There are to be a 'journeyed 'vention o' the colored poplin o' these districts, at the Old Turnpike Glade, for the confusion of useful knowledge among the risin' degeneracy. White poplin 'vited to 'tend—no diffunce what color. An' I myself was 'missioned by the 'mittee to 'vite Mr. Bruin, the extinguished Phrenzyologist, to 'liver a lecture on Phrenzyology an' Crazyology, an' to tell him as a number o' crazy-ums (*craniums*) would be 'mitted, for the practical examplation o' the skyence." And having delivered this eloquent oration, the Goblin bowed, with an air of extreme self-satisfaction, and waited his answer.

"Yes! tell them I will be along soon," replied the dwarf, to the surprise of Magdalene.

But when Gulliver, with a second and deeper bow, left them alone, Bruin said—

"Yes, Magdalene, I will go and make them a speech. What right have I to laugh at them? I sometimes think that the pedantry and pretension of our greatest philosophers, are as amusing to the angels, as the Goblin's learning and magniloquence to us. Yes, Magdalene, I will go, and thank God for the opportunity of saying something to a crowd that may possibly do them good!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE YOUNG HOUSEKEEPERS.

To cheer with swee repast the fainting guest,
To lull the weary on the couch of rest,
To warm the traveller numbed with winter cold,
The young to cherish, to support the old,
The sad to comfort, and the lost direct—
These are their cares, and this their glorious task,
Can Heaven a nobler give, or mortals ask?

Sir William Jones.

The time arrived for the termination of Helen Hervey's governess duties at the hall, and the emancipation of her pupils from her gentle rule. Miss Hervey had tried to persuade Judge Washington to give his grand-daughter the advantage of a two years' residence at some fashionable finishing school; but to this proposition the Judge was firmly opposed.

It was early on a Spring morning, that Mr. Hervey arrived in a gig to take Helen home. Helen took leave of her pupils with some emotion, but consoling herself and them with the reflection that the Old Forest Parsonage was but a few miles off—a pleasant morning or afternoon ride—that, therefore, they should all occasionally meet during the week, as well as regularly every sabbath at church. After she was gone, Virginia and Magdalene remained on the piazza looking after her, until the sweeping curve of the carriage drive took her in a semi-circle around to the back of the grounds, towards the thick woods behind, in which she was quickly lost to sight.

Then the Judge, with the view of turning their attention from sad subjects, placed a benedictory hand on each young head, and said,

"My dears, you are freed from the school room, only to be promoted to the superintendence of household affairs. Up to this time, Polly Pepper has managed pretty well for an old man, two girls, and their governess; but Polly, as she says herself, has been 'growing older and older every day' of her life; therefore the establishment requires other management. I suppose now, that I have a young lady to present to the world," continued he, stroking Virginia's glistening red hair, and looking with affectionate pride upon her—"that I should be expected to engage some accomplished housekeeper, but the same feeling that prevented me from sending you away from home to a fashionable academy, my dear, hinders me now from placing a stranger at the head of my household. I prefer that my own girls should be at the head of domestic affairs. Come with me into the library, and we will talk further of this matter," and patting the two girls on the head, he sent them in before him.

It was arranged that Virginia and Magdalene should keep house alternate weeks, Virginia taking the first week, and entering upon her duties from the next Monday, (*this* being Friday.)

Virginia began her new career with the zeal and ardor that characterized all the feelings, sayings and doings of our beautiful red-haired girl. What a housekeeper she would be indeed! what bread, what butter, what cheese she would make! what tongues and hams she would cure! What domestic carpets, counterpanes, and quilts, she would manufacture! What webs of linen, cotton, and woollen cloth she would weave! What socks and stockings she would knit!—*or rather*—in what a very superior manner she would have these things done, and how many prizes would be won at the newly established Agricultural Fair!—until suddenly it occurred to her that all the prizes *she* would win, Magdalene would miss, and then she hastily sought Magdalene. She found Magdalene in her own chamber engaged in painting an historic subject—the trial of Joan of Arc. For months past Magdalene Hawk's natural serenity had fallen into melancholy—lately the melancholy had deepened into gloom. The family had sought, by every delicate and affectionate effort, to raise her spirits, but without success. Judge Washington had been especially kind, attentive, and even respectful to the girl, whose perfect beauty, grace, truth, and genius had won his highest admiration, while her unfortunate social position appealed to his tenderest and most benevolent sympathies—but all in vain! The goodness of Judge Washington did but deepen the gloom upon her spirits. It was indeed partly in the hope of dissipating this sadness, that the Judge had associated her with his grand-daughter in the government of the household.

Virginia, now dancing into the room, entreated her to choose from among the dairy, the spinning room, or the kitchen, that department of domestic economy, in which she would prefer to excel, and leave her the others. This, Magdalene declined doing, averring that she was sure she should never reach eminence by any of these roads. The sanguine blood of our red-haired child rushed to her brow at this irony, but Virginia had learned to repress her ebullitions of temper. A moment's thought, too, convinced her that this sarcasm upon her favorite pursuits, was not really levelled at herself, and she replied, gently,

"That is true, Magdalene! true, only because Providence intended me for nothing better than a good daughter, sister, and housewife, and I think that nature designed you for something more than that! You very much excel me in every drawing-room accomplishment, Magdalene! Besides father," (as she called her *grand*-father,) "father, Bruin, Joseph—*all* say that you have so much genius, so that you see you may easily afford to let me win some praise in the housekeeping department."

Touched by her gentle reply, Magdalene passed her arm around the waist of Virginia, and drawing her to her bosom, said,

"My dearest Virginia! my dearest girl! You have one grace for which it were well for me if I could barter all the best gifts I may chance to possess—you have GOODNESS, my own darling!—goodness, love, forbearance for all!"

"Ah, Lena! don't tell me that, dear! I have had such a temper in my time! And even now! even now! Why, Lena! if ever I try to hope I have conquered my faults, I am sure soon to fall into some evil temper that convinces me of my error. Ah, Lena! after all, the best thing in me is only my *earnest wish* that I *were* good! that I could do something for all God's goodness to me! Father says 'Love God'—but all my feelings are demonstrative or nothing. When I was an irritable little child, some years ago, if I grew angry with any one, I wished to slap them in the face, or if I loved any one, I wished to hug and kiss them. Now, when I feel benevolence, gratitude, love, towards any being, human or divine, I wish to *act* it out. Now, I do feel gratitude, love, to my Father, for all His boundless mercies—but I do not act it out, alas! No, no, Magdalene, do not call me *good;* by contrast it makes me feel so very, very *bad!*"

Short-lived, far too short-lived were all Virginia's quick emotions. Soon leaving the serious subject of her thoughts, and reverting to the former one of their conversation, she said,

"Talking of your accomplishments, Magdalene, I saw Bruin shake his wise head yesterday with a look of infinite profundity, and say—it was immediately after your reading the supper scene in Macbeth—'she reads that well—*too* well—*far* too well!' What did he mean by that, Lena?"

Magdalene smiled gravely, but remained silent. When at last she spoke, it was in reference to their relative position.

"Virginia, you and I are two young girls little over fifteen years of age, and we are not supposed to know much of society; yet this much even *books* have taught us—namely, that while a wealthy and beautiful heiress of a distinguished family takes the highest place in society, a girl, who bears her mother's maiden surname, has no entree therein. I do not complain of this, dearest; of any social law that secures the greatest good to the greatest number; I only say that it is so—that Magdalene Hawk has been made to feel it all her life—that neither Judge Washington's protection, nor his daughter's love, has been able to shield her from it—that directly, or indirectly, silently, or in words, she has been taunted with it from childhood, by even the very menials of the plantation!"

"Oh, Magdalene! Magdalene! and all these many years you have not complained! Oh, Magdalene! why is it that you shut your heart up so from all your friends? Why is it that you *never*, except when you are questioned, speak of yourself, your thoughts, your feelings, your sufferings, or your purposes? Why did you not complain of the very first affront you received? If you had, that would also have been the last affront offered to you; insult to our protege, our guest, Magdalene would have been visited with greater severity than an offence against me, the daughter of the house, for obvious reasons."

"I know it, and therefore, among other reasons, I would not complain even in childhood! Ginnie, darling! among a thousand faults I have not that of petty vengeance; I cannot punish a weak or powerless offender—anything, by birth, education, or position, inferior to myself, is safe, even from my just *anger*—while they may be sure of my protection and assistance as far as I have power, and they have need."

"Oh, Magdalene! how noble! how magnanimous! how different from *my* petty vengeances! May I become like you, Magdalene!"

"May you never, *never* be like me! No, Virginia! it is from no christian feeling, but out of an inherent personal pride, that this forbearance grows! The time is at hand when society will brand upon my brow the name—the *name*—the NAME!—with which I will not sully your pure ear, Virginia—the name that negro slaves, in their spite and jealousy, have called me! Shall I, who will have no power to reverse the sentence of the world—shall *I* take a mean vengeance on the poor negroes?—nonsense!—*never.*"

Virginia sprang to her feet, her eyes sparkling fire—her sanguine blood crimsoning the brow through which the swollen vein throbbed, as she exclaimed, passionately—

"You have no right to that name!—no right to that name! Let me hear of any one who has called you that name, and they shall leave the plantation this day! Society! I have heard all my life of the place I should hold in society! the duty I owed society! But that world that frowns upon *you*, Magdalene, shall never have a chance of smiling upon me! That world which would crush the crown of thorns into your noble brow, Magdalene, shall never place the diadem of its loyal approbation upon mine! Oh! *do* not!—*do* not talk so! I do so *much* wish to govern my-

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self, and not to get angry! But *do* not! *do* not, Magdalene!"

And Ginnie's little gust of passion passed off in a shower of tears upon Magdalene's neck.

Magdalene, who only answered this outburst by saying, gently—

"Enthusiast!—you know not what you say!"

"Magdalene! Magdalene! I have been betrayed into one of my angry fits again! Magdalene! those who insult you, fling a slur upon the white bosom of my own angel where you lay in infancy. Magdalene, it is partly your own act—*why do* you call yourself by your mother's maiden name, when the proudest name in the state is yours by every family and every legal right, Magdalene Mountjoy?"

"No, Ginnie, no! never will I assume the name of a family who give no sign of their knowledge of my existence. No, Ginnie! no! Old Adam Hawk is stern and harsh, and oftentimes unjust, and he has graved upon my heart some hard thoughts of himself—but he is proud and honest—he bestowed upon me all he had, his half savage name! I like it! It suits me! Magdalene Hawk!"

"Alas! how did this painful conversation originate?"

"You were speaking of my poor accomplishments. You said that Bruin shook his head with a look of profound wisdom, and declared that I read Macbeth too well. You wished to know what he meant. *I* know what he meant as well as *he* knows what *I* mean! Virginia, I must leave you, darling!"

"Leave me, Lena?"

"Yes, dear, for your own best interest and for mine! Do you know what makes the Judge look so sad and moody when he contemplates us? I will tell you! The time is near at hand when he must bring his heiress out! What shall he do with her foster sister? That question, that difficulty pains his kind heart. He had hoped, no doubt, that his patronage would have been a passport for me into the best society—the last year past has convinced him of his mistake. When Judge and Miss Washington are invited out to tea, Magdalene Hawk is always neglected?"

"But does Ginnie ever go when her sister has been forgotten?"

"*Forgotten!*"

"Yes, *forgotten*. I *will* believe that they have considered you only a casual visitor, and *so* forgotten you, Magdalene!"

"Well, let it pass. No, Virginia never accepts an invitation in which her sister is not included. But this must not continue. Miss Washington must not be secluded from the world because Magdalene Hawk is not admitted into it. Upon this very account must Magdalene leave her sister!"

"Oh, Lena! do not talk so! What can the world give me in exchange for my dear sister?" said Ginnie, clinging to her fondly.

Magdalene held her there a long time, and then said,

"Virginia! darling! I am not that I seem; People call me steady, still, patient! The Judge praises my calmness, my prudence, my self-possession! They do not know me! He does not know me! I did not till lately—perhaps I do not now, know myself! Ginnie, I am *not* calm! or if calm, not contented! no!—this seeming quietude is an insupportable heaviness of heart!"

"What have you *really* to make your heart heavy, Lena?"

"That is what *I* do not fully understand! I know most certainly that it is not from any of the causes I have mentioned! I am proud, Virginia, yet it is not wounded pride! I am ambitious, yet it is not the yearnings of ambition! It is an insupportable oppression of spirits that I struggle against in vain! I awake in the morning with a heavy, heavy weight upon my bosom, that I can neither comprehend nor shake off. I try to occupy myself with our daily tasks and amusements, but they do not interest me—the day is so tedious! life so weary—a mere round of eating, drinking, sleeping. I want—I know not what! I must do—I know not what!—but *something*. Life oppresses me most in the morning, when *all* life is waking to light! The sun brings me no gladness! I see him rise, and think that so he has been rising a hundred ages, and I wonder if he is not weary of the ceaseless round! I see the sun set, and I feel a sort of content that soon I shall lose all consciousness of life in a deep sleep."

"There is something the matter with you, Lena! You are not well! You must see Dr. McArthur!"

"Oh, I am *very* well!—*too* well! I wish that I were not! A pain, I think, would loosen—as it were—scatter this weight in my bosom! But tell me, Ginnie. I am sometimes curious to know—have *you* any such experiences?"

"No, indeed, Lena! I awake in the morning so beautifully! as if my guardian angel had kissed my eyelids—and I see before me my mother's dawn window, with the beautiful morning breaking, and the glorious sun rising, and never, never do I get tired of that vision of beauty and sublimity, for never does it appear the same, and ever does it present infinite variety. I feel how faithful our Father is to send the light of day; I feel loving and grateful for life and light, and I cannot help praising and praying then! Then I get up and dress. Now I will tell you the whole truth—as I stand before the glass and twine the red ringlets round my fingers and let them drop, and as they glisten so brilliantly in the morning sun, I feel grateful to the Lord even for giving me such beautiful hair!"

"And such a beautiful face and form, my dearest love!"

"Well, yes! I hope it is not vanity, or if it is, I hope I shall be able to put it away from me—but my soul loves my body's beauty as if it were its sister's—and oh, I feel so thankful to be beautiful, because it makes those I love happy, and makes them love me more! You are smiling now, Lena! Oh! I am glad to see you smile, if it is even at my folly! And now I am going to make you smile more, and at *more* folly. Next—don't be disgusted—I think about breakfast! You know I have a very good appetite, and I anticipate, with great gusto, the fragrant coffee, the hot muffins, fresh butter, soft crabs, or potted perch. And then, I think, how soon I may be able to get done trimming the flowers, and how much I can do on father's shirts before it is time to take our morning ride. And—if it happens to be my week—of what I shall give out for dinner. And of our afternoon sewing, and our sail upon the bay, and our round among the quarters, and of supper, and finally of our delightful evening readings in the wainscotted parlor. And above all, I wonder whether dearest Joseph will be able to leave his writing desk and spend the whole day with us or not! And oh! I have not told you a tithe of what I have to think of and to do! And through all I feel so profoundly grateful to the Lord for opening to us so many avenues to happiness, that their multiplicity is really, though delightfully, confusing. Lastly, I go to bed at night very, *very* tired! and it is the last of luxuries to fall asleep. Then I dream such beautiful dreams! Lena! you shall come out of your room and sleep with me! I always *did* want you to come and sleep with me, and so you shall! and I will love away that gloom from your spirits just as the sun shines away the night! Ah! Lena, be happy! You have everything that *I* have to make you happy! We are very much alike in many things. We are both orphans—we have each a grandfather—we are foster sisters as our mothers were before us. I acknowledge the relation with all its claims, with all my heart and soul! As long as I live, Lena! all that I have is thine! At present we have the same home, the same occupations, the same amusements!"

"Yes! *I*, by sufferance—not by right!"

"By *right*, Lena! by every right!"

"By *sufferance!* I am made to feel it every day! No, Ginnie! dearest sister! I am in a false position, and I embarrass all around me! Let me go!"

Virginia threw her arms around Magdalene's neck again, and said,

"*Why* go? Listen to me! I want to keep with me as long as I live all that I have with me now—dearest grandfather, as long as his life shall last, and Josey and you. And that that may be so, I *do* hope that by-and-bye, Josey will marry either you or me, just which he likes best, and then we can all live together, and never be separated! Why *should* people who love each other separate? It almost kills me to think of parting. Do not talk of it any more, please, Magdalene! Put it out of your head! Indeed it will make me ill if you do not! My head aches now, indeed it does! Anything that grieves me makes me ill, you know, Magdalene! Oh, Magdalene! I love you so dearly, don't grieve me, let me be happy!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE LOVE-SPELLS OF HALLOW EVE.

Glendower.—I can call spirits from the vasty deep —

Hotspur.—Why, so can I, or so can any man:
But will they come when you do call for them?

Shakspeare

Magdalene was accustomed to say that those she loved could make an angel or a demon of her. Those she loved indeed, possessed great power over that proud heart in its sternest mood. Virginia's clasping arms, and tearful eyes, and pleading voice, arrested Magdalene before she had given her vague intentions the form and substance of a defined purpose. She spoke no more of leaving Prospect Hall; but nevertheless "pondered these things in her heart." That her singular position in the family embarrassed every member thereof, was but too painfully evident—that they each and all loved her too well to willingly permit her to see this, was also certain. Did not duty as well as strong inclination require her to relieve them from the difficulty by withdrawing from the family. She felt that duty *did*. Whither should she go? "The world was all before her where to choose," and within her strength and courage to go forth and cope with it. But her first advancing step must be upon the hearts of those who loved her; and who, indeed, did not love our dark-haired girl with an affection deepened by compassion and elevated by admiration? Whither should she go? Her grandfather still lived at Blackthorn Grange, in company with Bruin the dwarf, and their sole domestic, Gulliver Goblin, where, year by year, he had grown more savage and morose. The residence of his grand-daughter there would have interrupted and annoyed him. Magdalene felt this, and as the infirmities of advancing years had not yet begun to affect that iron constitution—as no sort of *want* on his part appealed to her conscientiousness, Magdalene freely indulged her great repugnance to returning thither. No, excitement, active life!—was what she needed. She passed in mental review all the roads by

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which women, thrown upon their own resources for a living, generally arrive at independence or distinction—at wealth or eminence she would fain have said, but that the instances were so very rare. Beside mere manual labor, there were only—the teacher's desk, the pen, the stage! At a superficial glance, the first of these—the teacher's profession seemed to be the most desirable for *her*—but was *she* best fitted, or at all desirable to the profession?—for there were *two* sides to every subject, and Magdalene determined to look upon both, and in the perfect truth of her heart she felt and admitted that she who could not at all times govern her own spirit, was unfit to govern others. The pen? But Magdalene's life was all unlived, and what had she to say? Besides, she felt that much of the latent, the undeveloped, but wild energy of her nature must be broken or exhausted before she could sit down patiently day after day, night after night, to study and to labor for distant and doubtful success. The stage? That had a potent fascination for the mind of the restless girl, and she dwelt upon the idea in secret. She felt that Adam Hawk would be outraged, the Judge would be shocked, Mr. Hervey, Helen, and Joseph scandalized, and Virginia deeply grieved and mortified by such a proposition on her part. She could, without remorse, have outraged Adam Hawk, shocked Judge Washington, scandalized Mr. Hervey, Helen, and Joseph; but with all her independence, energy, and daring, she could not find it in her heart to grieve and mortify the tender-hearted girl; this restrained her. The greatest tenderness is sometimes found united with the greatest strength, and so it was in Magdalene. But her thoughtfulness deepened into melancholy, her melancholy darkened into gloom. "I am a trouble and a discord here among my best friends—I *must* leave them. Better I should give Virginia one short, sharp sorrow on my departure, than live to be a constant source of embarrassment and distress to her. As for the rest—were I ever so fit or so willing to be a teacher, the blot upon my name would exclude me from success. No! I am fit for nothing but the profession I have thought of. And I know that, be its toils, its difficulties, its temptations, its dangers what they may, *I* can enter it and hold my course in it as purely, as highly—who knows?—perhaps as eminently as the great and good Mrs. Siddons herself! At least the profession suits *me*, and *I* suit it! I would Virginia did not love me so!"

So dreamed, and thought, and reasoned, and regretted our troubled gipsy. But Virginia *did* love her "so,"—and she watched her "so,"—and yet dared not speak to her again upon the subject of her gloom, lest she should hear again something about her wish to go away. No suspicion had Virginia of the real wish and purpose of her sister. No, she naturally supposed that if Magdalene wished to depart, it would be to become a governess in some gentleman's family.—Judge Washington also noticed the dejection of Magdalene, and without suspecting her wish to leave the mansion house, but divining the cause of her pensiveness, his manner to her became every day more kind, considerate, and affectionate. Joseph also noticed it, and sought by every delicate attention to assure her of his love and esteem.

But the eyes—the mind—the heart that watched Magdalene with the intensest interest, were those of which she thought the least in the world—those of which she took no note at all—those of Theodore Hervey, the son of the Rev. Mr. Hervey, the brother of Helen, the college chum of Joseph Carey.

Theodore Hervey had returned from college to spend his vacations, at the time that Helen had left Prospect Hall permanently. But Theodore and Helen were frequent visitors at the mansion house, and all that he saw of Magdalene Hawk there, and all that his sister told him of her in their intimate conversations, but served to draw and rivet his heart to our dark, stern girl. Theodore Hervey was very much like his sister, in form, feature and complexion; of a tall, slight and elegant figure; of pale, dark complexion, and hollow features; of shadowy eyes, and shadowy hair, and that natural expression of profound, but beautiful melancholy, peculiar to those predestined by the love of the gods to an early grave, or foredoomed by the hate of fiends to a violent and a bloody death.

He was now reading theology with his father, preparatory to entering Holy Orders. If now he was growing to love and worship Magdalene, it was diffidently, silently, reverently, and afar off; and his devotion was not suspected by any one, least of all by its pre-occupied object, among whose restless thoughts, love and marriage had no share.

One day, late in the autumn, Virginia sought her grandfather in his study, and requested his permission to invite a party of young people from the neighborhood, to spend a week or two at Prospect Hall, with a view, she said, of amusing her dear sister, and raising her spirits. The Judge, caressing his amiable child, gave his consent, hoping in his secret heart, that the beauty, grace, and genius of his young ward, Magdalene, might find such favor in the eyes of their visitors as to induce them to revoke the sentence by which she had been tacitly excluded from society. Very happy in having gained her grandfather's consent to the party—very merry in anticipation of the frolic, our impulsive child bounded away to consult Magdalene to make out her list, and to begin her preparations. Helen and Theodore Hervey, Broke Shields, the devoted cava-

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lier of the latter, Viola and Violet Swan, the twin nieces of General Mountjoy, were put upon the list, and to these, when they were submitted to the Judge, he added the name of SIR CLINTON CAREY.

"And who is he, dearest father?" inquired Virginia, with surprise.

"Your mother's English cousin—your second cousin, my child!" replied the Judge.

"Oh, yes! I remember now to have heard of him!"

"He has been making the tour of Europe, Asia, and a part of Africa—he has lived lately in Paris. He has just come out to Virginia, and is now a guest of General Mountjoy."

It was a warm, golden, refulgent autumn morning, when Virginia and Magdalene left the wainscoted parlor at the news that some one was coming, and stood in the vestibule to receive their guests. And Virginia's radiant face and joyous air, proved the life and eagerness of her social affections. The fair twin sisters, Viola and Violet Swan in advance. She clapped her hands softly, and exclaimed—

"Here they come! the beauties! the fairies! See how their white horses fly! Now they scud along, side by side! Now they spring apart! Now they come together, meeting softly as two white clouds! Oh! the loves! the beauties!—look at them, Magdalene!"

Very well worth looking at they were!—those two fair sisters—so very fair—so perfectly alike, that none but their nearest relatives and most intimate associates could tell them apart—the "White Swans" they were called from their name and their exceeding fairness—by some, Silver Swans, from their name, their fairness, and their wealth. They were blonds of the snowy order like—*themselves*—not of the sunny sort, like Virginia. Virginia's complexion was a blending of dazzling white with glowing carnation, her eyes were brilliant ultra-marine blue, and her ringlets a glistening red-gold. "The sisters" had fair, soft complexions, with delicate, peach-blossom bloom; with clear, light blue eyes, and pale, yellow hair. Their motions in guiding their horses were light, swift, smooth, and graceful, and so simultaneous, that it seemed as though they were actuated by the same soul.

"See, they have outridden Broke Shields—but now he comes up with them," said Ginnie, as she hastened down the steps to meet them.

Magdalene lingered behind. She saw in those fair sisters two girls, distant relatives of General Mountjoy, who, without any claim upon him, occupied her own rightful place in the home and heart of her grandfather. But she noted this only as a fact—only in passing—without one bitter feeling—for our "Indian princess," with all her great faults, was totally incapable of envy or jealousy. As the sisters came up the steps, holding slightly up their light blue riding-habits, they bowed frigidly in acknowledgement of Magdalene's salutation, and a cloud passed over the sunshine of Virginia's countenance. Magdalene's brow was unruffled—serene—not, alas, in meekness, but in pride. Broke Shields gayly saluted her, as he sprung after his cousins into the house; but he who came last—Theodore Hervey—addressed her with profound respect, and drawing her arm within his own, took her into the house. Blind Magdalene! But with her own heart untouched; with her mind pre-occupied, what could she know or suspect of that deep, unspoken love?

The other guests of the little party, with *one* exception, assembled in the course of the day. But all with one accord, though without preconcert, avoided Magdalene. Perhaps this was in part Magdalene's own fault. Wrapped in her pride and reserve, she had not shown that courteous bearing to the visitors which they had a right to expect from every member of their host's family. And Magdalene had not done this, from a haughty aversion to being suspected of courting society.

That evening, after an early tea, the girls dispersed to their several chambers to dress for the drawing-room, for there was to be an accession of company, for whose diversion some scenes from Shakspeare were to be acted. Magdalene sat before her glass, combing out her long, straight, glossy black hair—not unconscious of, or indifferent to, the midnight beauty of her own countenance, or its stormy power of expression. The promise of the child was richly fulfilled in the woman, whose dark and splendid style of beauty had its correspondences in night, in starlight, in storms, in fire, in the fierce flashing and burning, or in the beautiful languor and repose of the leopardess's countenance. Magdalene bound her hair—that soft, and black, and brilliant as herself, was also firm as herself in refusing to twine its jetty locks into ringlets—into large bands, that divided about her majestic brow, and sweeping, like two folds of glossy black satin, down each crimson cheek, were twisted into a rich and heavy knot behind, confined by one large golden pin. She wore a dark changeable brocade, whose shades were black, and whose lights were crimson, and without ornament, in this dark bright costume, that suited well her Indian style, she went down into the drawing-room. The apartment was, as yet, quite vacant, and she stood musing before the fire. The glowing lights and shadows of the drawing-room threw a richer, warmer, brighter hue over the gorgeous picture of her beauty. She stood there musing, lost to all around her—until a voice at her side murmured,

"My cousin, Miss Virginia Washington, I presume?"

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Never had Magdalene heard tones so deep, so soft, yet so clear as these. She raised her eyes to behold standing before her a gentleman of princely presence and almost god-like beauty.

"My cousin, Miss Washington, may I hope?" inquired the stranger again.

Those tones, the most mellifluous she ever heard, and coming from the most magnificent looking man she ever saw, thrilled upon her ear—reached her heart. But nothing of this impromptu admiration, involuntary worship, was visible. With serene courtesy, she replied,

"Miss Washington has not yet left her own apartment for the evening. I believe I have the pleasure of first welcoming Sir Clinton Carey to Prospect Hall?"

The superb stranger bowed and smiled with stately grace and graciousness—his air and manner at the same time paying the involuntary tribute of admiration to the beautiful girl with whom he spoke.

"Will you be seated, Colonel Carey?" inquired Magdalene, with a slight move of her hand towards an arm-chair.

Again he bowed low, nor were the dark brilliant eyes, eloquent with respectful admiration, withdrawn, until he said,

"I have the honor of seeing—"

"Magdalene Hawk—Miss Washington's *dame-du-compagnie*," replied our girl, with the slightest perceptible taste of irony in her words.

The gracious brow of the august stranger clouded, and with a grave bend of the head, he sat down.

Light footsteps on the stairs!—light laughter in the passages! merry voices at the door, and the girls were all in the drawing-room! Judge Washington was among them. Perceiving and advancing at once to his new guest, he introduced him to the company. Last of all, he presented him to Virginia, whose radiant beauty that evening was brought out dazzlingly by the contrast of her dark mazarine blue satin dress. Magdalene saw—without seeming to see—everything. She saw him address Virginia, the blending profound respect with ardent admiration—the same chivalrous gallantry that distinguished his manner when first addressing herself. She saw him sink into a seat by the side of Virginia, with an air of majestic indolence, and let his haughty eye rove over the assembled company with an expression of weary scorn—passing *her* form as if, like Rachel's children, she—"were not." And she saw that, for not one in that room or house, did he seem to feel the slightest regard, except for his cousin Virginia—because, probably, she *was* his cousin, by his mother's side. And Virginia, benevolent, social, lively, and gracious to all, was gracious to him as well. Magdalene had never seen such an incarnation of sovereign, self-sufficing pride, as this magnificent Englishman presented. And it had a strong attraction for a nature like hers. And, oh, prophetic wisdom of the heart! hidden mystery of the spirit! how was it that, overlooked by his arrogance, she yet knew herself, of all that company, to be the only one who really engaged his seemingly idle thoughts, as she felt too certainly that he absorbed her own? What instinct was it now that caused her to rejoice that her theatrical projects had never been broached to any one, far less put into execution? What instinct was it that prompted her to forego her purpose of assisting at the dramatic entertainment of the present evening? He who reads the deep secrets of the heart, knew; Magdalene did not surmise.

Early in the evening dramatic scenes from Shakspeare were first faintly, then eagerly and vociferously called for by the young people. There was a general rising, a general pushing back of chairs, and clearing of a space in front of the curtained arch that divided the saloon as folding doors do now; and Broke Shields, who seemed to consider himself Master of Ceremonies, called out—

"Scene, Macbeth—Act I., Scene V.—Lady Macbeth—Macbeth!" and going gaily up to Magdalene, who, with him, had been appointed to enact the scene, he stopped short, put his laugh to a violent death, assumed his tragedy face, and, with mock gravity, offered his arm to lead Magdalene to her place. But gently and firmly Magdalene declined taking an active part in the amusement. And, despite his surprise, his displeasure, rising at last to astonishment and indignation, Magdalene was immovable.

He left her, and, crest fallen, went up to Virginia.

"The vengeance of it is, that *I* am thrown out of office! *I* should not care at all whether she played or not, if *I* could play! But the diabolism of it is that, with this bandit's face of mine, I can play nothing but Macbeth, nor *that* without *her*, to galvanize me into a little devilism.

"Did time, place and circumstance adhere—'

it would be a relief to swear just now!"

Virginia placed her hand upon his lips with childish familiarity, and saying some soothing, coaxing words to comfort him, bade him call the Tempest, Act III., Scene I., in which she and Joseph would do their best to discredit themselves, and amuse the company, as Miranda and Ferdinand.

Magdalene had seen all this, also,—she had seen the brilliant eyes of Sir Clinton Carey fixed on her in approval, but withdrawn the instant they were met. She saw now a cloud overshadow the arrogant splendor of his countenance, as Virginia, with a quick apology, sprang away from his side, flashed like a sunbeam through the room, and took her place on the stage, across

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which Joseph already bore a log. Soon, however, his brow resumed its majestic immobility.

And Theodore Hervey was at Magdalene's side, looking at her with his large, dark, melancholy eyes, murmuring to her in his low, love-tuned voice—and calling her attention to Virginia, who, with her beauty and grace, and some genius for the sport, and much gentle affection for the Ferdinand of the evening, was getting through the part with great success.

Two things Magdalene noticed during the course of the evening—that Sir Clinton never seemed to see *her* again, and that, in leading Virginia to supper, he had said, in reply to a gay question of Virginia's, and in a voice of cold rebuke—

"Scarcely an accomplishment in which I should expect to see my cousin Virginia a proficient."

The next day, after breakfast, as it was very fine weather, a sail upon the bay was proposed and unanimously agreed upon, and the whole party set out—Sir Clinton escorting Virginia, and effectually separating her from other companionship. And Virginia chatted and laughed in girlish glee, quite unmindful of his majestic displeasure. Magdalene was of the party, attended this time by Joseph, whose earnest brow wore now such an impress of sorrow, that Virginia, seeing it, abruptly left her august relative, and sitting by Joseph, laid her hands on his, and looked up in his eyes, with oh! such a look of unutterable tenderness and sympathy in her searching gaze of inquiry; and Joseph took and pressed those two little soft hands together, between his own, and returned that look of profound and unspeakable love, and they did not think of others in the boat, and they did not see Sir Clinton Carey's eyes fixed with haughty surprise upon the act of Joseph. But Magdalene saw this, and she saw Sir Clinton saunter away to the other end of the vessel, and join Judge Washington, and enter into an earnest conversation with him. Their glances were frequently directed to Virginia and Joseph, who sat there quite happy, and unconscious of being observed.

The third day, being very beautiful, an equestrian excursion was proposed, and accepted by all the company. Joseph had always been the attendant of Virginia in all her riding expeditions; but now, just before they were about to set out, Judge Washington called him, and placing his hand upon his shoulder affectionately, begged him to remain, and pass the forenoon with him in his library, where he very much needed his assistance in the arrangement of some business.

The fourth day was spent at home, but Joseph was sent to the county town on business, and remained away three or four days, during which Virginia's high spirits gradually sunk; and when Sir Clinton Carey gravely demanded the reason of her pensiveness, she answered, without the least reserve,

"No, I am not happy. I never was so far from being so, for I never was separated a day from my brother before, and now he has been gone three days, and I feel so lost!" and Ginnie burst into tears, and ran away.

That afternoon, however, Joseph returned, and brought back Ginnie's smiles and glee. And as the little party of girls were sitting around the fire that night, talking, among other things, of the superstitious observances, and the love spells of Halloween, Ginnie laughingly proposed that they should each test the efficacy of a potent charm to invoke a night vision of future destiny, and an image of the future life-long partner. This proposition was received with acclamation by all present, except Magdalene Hawk, whose serious refusal drew from Ginnie the merry sally,

"Do you know, girls, that Lena, who is not afraid of any thing in the visible world, has a vague terror of the spiritual?"

But then Ginnie put her arms around Magdalene's neck, and placed her rosy lips to Magdalene's cheek, and prevailed, and Magdalene, like the others, would lift her sacrilegious hand to the curtain of the Future, to draw it and reveal its mysteries.

CHAPTER X.

THE VISION OF MAGDALENE.

A horrid spectre rises to my sight
Close by my side, and plain and palpable,
In all good seeming and close circumstance,
As man meets man. *Joanna Baillie.*

Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with! *Shakspeare.*

Let those who have studied the "Night side of Nature," and believe in the "Rochester Rappings," account for the developments of this chapter—for I shall not attempt to—though the story is the best authenticated of all the ghost stories I ever heard. Let the unimaginative set it down at once as a "singular coincidence." I only insist upon its truth.

Magdalene entered the breakfast parlor with her usual reserved expression of countenance and perfect repose of manner—but, for the first time in her life, *pale*. Virginia was already there. It was Virginia's week to superintend the housekeeping, and she was now arranging the breakfast-table, and one maid-servant and a boy

were in attendance upon her. As Magdalene entered, Virginia looked up—by an involuntary impulse, the eyes, the thoughts of the two young girls met—both smiled, but it was with sickly smiles. Virginia turned and dismissed her two assistants. They were alone, and Virginia was pale and agitated.

"I—I had really a very bad dream last night, and it—it has shaken my nervous system dreadfully. I—I am truly ashamed of my nervousness this morning, Lena!" faltered Virginia, with another faint smile, as she dropped into a chair by the corner of the fire-place.

"What was your dream?" inquired Magdalene, standing on the rug, and resting her brow against the mantle-piece.

"Oh! quite a 'raw head and bloody bones' affair—such as might be told to frighten children with, and I am nothing better than a child," she replied, shuddering.

"Tell me about it," said Magdalene, in the same even tone, and with the same moveless attitude.

Virginia paused, turned paler, trembled, recovered herself, and proceeded,

"At first my dream was fair, very fair, and all was fresh and sweet, and bright and joyous in Summer landscapes, where I wandered with one I loved dearly. I was, besides, very, very happy, I know not why or wherefore, for nothing is distinctly traced upon my memory, but the impression remains very beautiful. Then, suddenly! as the rising of a thunder-storm upon a Summer's day! all was instantly changed! All was mystically dark and clouded, and troubled and threatening; and I was besides very, very wretched—I know not why or wherefore; again, nothing is distinctly traced on my memory, but the impression remains very wretched. Suddenly, it seemed, the lightning flashed! the thunder rolled! and I sprang up in my bed with my heart violently palpitating, to see—only my quiet chamber with its blue hangings, and my dawn window, with the full moon shining peacefully through it, and the glistening snow on the plains without; but while I looked, the door that connects your chamber with mine, swang noiselessly open, and a tall, dark man, of exceeding grace and majesty of form, slowly advanced into the room, crossed the floor, and in turning again, faced me! I saw not his features plainly, for oh, horror! a ghastly crash drove in his forehead, and the blood in thick turbid streams crawled down his cheeks and dropped upon his chest. He seemed to regard me with profound sorrow a moment before he slowly, mournfully disappeared. A deadly faintness seized me, there was numbness in all my flesh, a rushing sound in my ears, the room swam before me, and I sank into insensibility. When I came to myself, or rather when I awoke—for I consider all this to have been a dream of course—the night was far advanced, and the beautiful dawn that I like so to watch, was slowly smiling up the horizon—beautiful awakening from a frightful dream! but sweet Heaven! Magdalene! Magdalene! what ails you? You are as pale as ashes! You are fainting! Magdalene! Oh! I must call some one!" exclaimed Virginia, as she caught the falling form of her sister, and rested her in the chair. "I must call some one!"

"No, no! no, no! do not! there! I have recovered, you see!" said Magdalene, dashing her hands twice or thrice across her brow, and sitting up.

"Was it my dream that frightened you so? *You* who are not afraid of anything?'

"It was *no* dream! It was a VISION!'

"Nonsense, my dear Lena!"

"It was a VISION! It WAS a VISION! *I*, even *I* saw the same! the same in every leading feature! I, too, had the dream first of beauty and of glory; but instead of wandering in Summer gardens with one I loved, I stood with one I worshipped, in a magnificent palace, resplendent with everything that wealth and genius and luxury could gather, to create a terrestrial paradise; but beyond and above this, I felt proud and joyous, with a consciousness of inborn strength, and energy and determination, that should command for me success, power, dominion! When, suddenly! all was changed! not as in your dream, by a Summer thundergust, tempestuous but renovating—no! but by a CONFLAGRATION! bright, dazzling, awfully sublime! illuminating a city with terrific splendor! but devastating! destructive! desolating! leaving a *desert of charred and blackened ruins!* and beside and below all this, I felt fallen and despairing, with the consciousness of an overwhelming defeat. Then, with the hot rush of a burning flame of fire! with the terrible rush of a fiend about to catch my soul to perdition! came the awful shock that thundered me from sleep! I bounded! sprang up! with my heart in a death pause! and an icy sweat beaded upon my brow! to see my room, closed up and dark, but for the lurid red light of smouldering fire in the chimney—to see! the same tall, dark, awfully beautiful form with majestic but blood-streaming brow, and uplifted hands, stride towards me, with vengeful and denouncing gestures! *I* did not tremble, or faint, or turn my gaze away! my eyes were fascinated to gaze upon that horrid form until—" She paused—every vestige of color left her face; it grew white as that of the dead; shudder after shudder convulsed her form—she remained silent.

Virginia's emotions were quicker and more frequent, but not so deep, so powerful, or so lasting, as those of the sterner Magdalene; she too trembled, but was the first to recover and spe

"Dear Mag, be composed; such dreams are frightful, I know, and they shake our nerves very much; but as we know they are *but* dreams, we should not permit them to affect our minds."

"It was a vision! a PROPHETIC VISION!" said Magdalene, as though the words had leaped from her white lips without her consent.

"Nonsense, my dear Mag, you will laugh at this next week! Come! tell me the rest, and then let us forget our folly and our dream!"

"It was a VISION! and never, never, can I tell you how that vision ended—which curdles my very blood with horror but to think of it!"

"*You*, my dear, dear Mag! my Indian princess! my Semiramis! my Joan D'Arc! *you*, my martial and heroic Meg! *Your* hot blood congeal at the vision of a spectre in a dream! Why, even cowardly little me, who gets scared if a bull-dog flies out at me, or a horse runs away with me—even *I*, if the grim Enemy himself stood bodily before me, after the first shock, and the little reverberating quivering was over, I should cross myself, and ask him what he wanted!"

"Yet *you* fainted!"

"No, dear Lena, I *dreamed* I fainted, it was *all* a dream!

"It was a VISION! and *you*—you tremble now!"

"Ah, dear Mag! it is only my weak nerves, you know! My nerves are a great deal weaker than yours—for yours are not weak at all! they are strong, immoveable—or I never saw them moved till now; and that astonishes me so! but for *me!* if a door claps I start and tremble, yet I know there is no danger; even so now I shudder at the recollection of my dream, though I know that it meant nothing!"

"*It was prophetic!*"

"It was pickled oysters."

"*It was prophetic!*"

"Nay then, dear Mag, if you speak so solemnly, I must reply as gravely—seriously then, I do not believe in dreams, signs, omens, apparitions, or presentiments; and neither nightmare nor remarkable coincidence, can inspire me with any faith in them!"

"Yet wherever belief in God, or a saving faith in the Devil has been professed; wherever the existence of a surrounding spiritual world of good and of evil has been felt; *there* has been confessed more or less faith in dreams, omens, auguries, presentiments, and visions!"

"Yes, and other errors, superstitions, and falsehoods."

"Faith in these things is more widely diffused than faith in the Christian religion itself."

"So has *all* evil been, alas!"

"I wish you *could* shake my belief in presentiments and visions!"

"I would that I could build up your faith in God. Do you know, Magdalene, that if I had marvellousness enough to believe in these things, and to have my mind disturbed by them, *what I would do?*"

"No—that is what I should like to know."

"There is one great means, to every good end."

"Well?"

"One absolute sovereign, God! one sure agent, prayer!"

"Prayer!"

"Yes, *prayer*. There is no evil so great, or so small—from the overwhelming calamity that prostrates all the strength of mind and body, to the absurd hallucination that seems too trifling and ridiculous to excite the pity of the most charitable friend; no evil that annoys any creature of God's, that may not be cured, or alleviated, or sanctified by prayer. Prayer is the universal remedy!"

"But if one has not faith to pray."

"Prayer is the remedy even for that great evil! Listen! 'Faith is the *gift* of God,' 'Ask and ye shall receive.' If one sits in such darkness that they cannot see God, they can at least grope for Him, and the very groping will disperse the shadows, and all will grow clear and light—they can at least invoke the 'Unknown God,' and Him they ignorantly worship shall be declared to them! and this God is the one great treasurer of the Universe who 'possesseth all things,' and 'who giveth freely to those that ask Him.' 'Faith is the gift of God,' and this gift once obtained should be cherished as the one great means to every good end! I am not superstitious, I do not believe in the presentiments, signs and omens, dreams, visions and apparitions that trouble some imaginations so much—and—candidly and seriously speaking—neither do I despise and reject them. In all ages and all nations of the earth they have received some credence—faith in them, some faith, has pervaded literature, and even religion—while philosophy herself, with all her cool truths and hard facts and subtle logic, has not been able to refute and overthrow them. The Scriptures themselves say that we war—'not with flesh and blood (only,) but with powers and principalities of darkness.' We know also that the spiritual world lies all around us with its benign or malignant influences acting upon our souls and destinies; we know that some human beings from a purer organization are more susceptible of spiritual influences for good or evil than others. If I were superstitious, however, —if this singular coincidence of our fearful dream—after having startled my nerves from their propriety continued to oppress my mind, I would recollect that there is ONE Supreme Ruler of the Universe, Lord of Angels and

Archangels, and Lord also of the evil and revolted spirits, and I would call on Him to avert the evil, and I should feel comforted and cheered, knowing that I was safe under the shadow of my Father's omnipotent throne."

"Might—would He not avert the evil without your prayer?"

"Yes! I believe so!—all evil that would not be ultimate—if any such case can be; but then He has permitted us to pray to Him, and prayer renews our faith, and hope and courage."

"Dear Ginnie! dear child! you sweet, solemn little seraph! if you cannot cure, you will at least console me. Dear, gentle Ginnie! how I love you!"

"And I you, Lena!"

"Oh, Ginnie! It has gone, Ginnie—the cloud! Oh, Ginnie! it is thus oftener with me than you think! Sometimes in the midst of the brightest, warmest sunshine of the heart, a cloud suddenly oversweeps my soul, and all is coldness and darkness and terror! and sometimes the cloud descends in a shower of tears, and sometimes it is dispersed by a sun-burst of love, as now, my Ginnie! all is clear and bright, and glad and hopeful!"

They were interrupted by the entrance of two servants, one bearing a waiter, upon which the hot coffee and chocolate steamed, and the other bringing a larger one, upon which hot rolls, muffins, Virginia corn-pone, and various meats were placed. Ginnie left Magdalene's side to superintend the "plummet and line" arrangement of the dishes, and then gave orders for the second bell to be rung, which soon brought in all the other members of the family, as well as all their guests. The morning meal was a very joyous one, notwithstanding the fact that the visitors were to depart immediately after breakfast. The girls jested with each other about the fate spell. They would insist upon hearing whether Ginnie had been visited by a prophetic vision; but Ginnie laughed her gay silvery laugh, and shaking all her bright ringlets, declared that she had seen the identical spectre, which

"Drew Priam's curtains at the dead of night."

And then the butterfly fancies of the volatile girls flew off to something else; and soon after, they arose from the table and dispersed to prepare for their hasty rides home; and this was the more necessary that the sky was slightly overcast, and a light soft snow, which might increase, was beginning to fall. With many a laugh and gay caress, and affectionate invitation, they bade adieu to Virginia. In two hours the house was clear of guests, if we except Sir Clinton Carey, who seemed now an inmate.

"I do love a snowy day once in a while, so much! It keeps everybody together around the fire—and it gives one an excuse for a very rich and spicy soup for dinner! And I particularly like the snowy day to-day, for it will keep every body away, and I am going to be so busy!" said Ginnie, as she laughingly kissed her hand to the fireside circle and sprang through the door.

Ginnie was engaged in household cares all the forenoon. Dinner was to be ordered as usual. Then the whole house, lately in state for company, and now vacated by the visitors, was to be restored to its normal condition. The guest-chambers were to be visited—the white Marseilles quilts and toilette-covers, and the rich elaborate Aurilla nettings and valances, were to be taken off, aired, folded with dry lavender twigs, and laid away in the large chests of the linen-room; and bright scarlet white and green plaid yarn counterpanes, of domestic manufacture, and home-made hanging and covers were to replace them. And then the guest-chambers were to be shut up. And then the saloon was to be visited—furniture covered, lamps and chandeliers shrouded, pictures and mirrors veiled, and the apartment closed. Finally, it was one o'clock—their old-fashioned dinner-hour—before Ginnie finished her task, drew off her sheep-skin mittens, changed her dress, and took her place at the head of the dinner-table, where the party consisted only of the Judge, Sir Clinton, Magdalene, and Joseph.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EVENING FIRESIDE.

Now stir the fire, and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round;
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steamy column, and the cups
That cheer, but not inebriate, wait on each.
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.

Cowper.

The lines above were aptly quoted by Ginnie, as she busied herself with preparing the wainscoted parlor for the evening circle. She was not quite alone. Joseph was with her, but under the spell of a gloom so profound, as to resist all her gay and gentle efforts at enlivening him.

"I like Cowper best of all poets," she said, as after having adjusted the cushions of a settee, she settled herself upon it. "I like Cowper best of all poets, because he is so downright domestic and natural! he has immortalized firesides, sofas, and tea; newspapers, needles, and embroidery—everything that is cozy, comfortable, and familiar. You and Lena may like Milton, Byron, and Shakspeare, and glory in the wars of angels and fiends, with the infinity of space for a battle field, and the throne of the universe for a stake; or

you may revel amid night-storms on the Alps—and giaours, and corsairs, and conflagrations; or you may enjoy yourselves in the company of humpback assassins, female demons, and poor old murdered kings; or lose yourselves in any of the grand visions of the sublime poets; but I, for my part, love sensible Mr. Cowper, who knew how to appreciate cozy parlor comforts!"

Not a word from Josey, who stood upon the rug, leaning his brow against the chimney-piece, and gazing down into the fire. Ginnie looked at him keenly, and resumed her conversation.

"I think, however, that with all my favorite's charms, he was himself a laughable commentary on discontented people!"

Joseph feeling that this little gibe was intended for his benefit, asked, without lifting up his head—

"In what manner?"

"Come sit by me, Josey, and I will tell you. There; that is my dear brother! now smile away that cloud from your brow! if you don't, I'll send for the laundry-maid, and make her sprinkle and iron the wrinkles out of your forehead! so! now! this dear Mr. Cowper, this first of poets, in my humble estimation, notwithstanding his delightful home, his beautiful garden, his cozy parlor, and his high appreciation; his exquisite, his ineffable enjoyment of such comforts and luxuries—and the luscious gusto with which he dwells upon them in his verse—this discontented Mr. Cowper delivers himself in this strain:

"'Oh! for a lodge *in some vast wilderness;*
Some boundless contiguity of shade,' &c., &c., &c.

Now! what do you think of *that* for discontent? having no comfort or luxury to wish for in his home, he wants a lodge in the wilderness! For my part, I think he ought to have been sent across the desert as a lesson! And now what ought to be done with my brother, who, despite all I can do to make him happy, looks so sad?"

Joseph smiled in answer, and laid his hand affectionately on her glistening head; but, oh, it was such a pensive smile! Virginia leaning towards him, placed both hands upon his shoulders, and looked up into his eyes with a gaze of such deep, unutterable affection! Joseph passed his arm around her waist, stooped and pressed his lips upon her brow, as she dropped her head upon his bosom. So they remained a moment, although the sound of approaching footsteps were heard, and Sir Clinton Carey, followed by the Judge, entered the parlor. Slowly then their arms unlocked, and they separated.

"Where is Magdalene?" inquired the deep, rich tones of the Judge, as he dropped into his large, easy chair.

He was answered by the entrance of Magdalene herself. Sir Clinton had taken the seat on the sofa by the side of Virginia, vacated by Joseph, who remained standing by the centre table.

Virginia had a plan for that evening's amusement. She wished, at the first favorable moment, to ask Magdalene to read, for the entertainment of the company, a portion of the new poem of Sir Walter Scott—Marmion. This she desired for two purposes—to bring out the fine elocution of her sister, and to enforce on the latter the argument of the morning's homily, by the moral of the evening's entertainment.

So, after a little chat—about the heavy fall of snow, etc.—taking advantage of the first dead pause, Virginia proposed the reading of a portion of Marmion, and selected the Vision of Dun Eden's Cross. The proposition was readily acceded to by the little circle, and Magdalene invited to become the reader. Magdalene took the book with an involuntary air of proud indolence, and commenced reading; but soon the high, heroic tone of the sentiment, the martial measure of the rythm aroused her enthusiasm, and forgetting pride and scorn—forgetting self and others—she threw her whole soul, with all its strength, fire, and destructiveness into the subject.

When she had done reading, the book dropped gently on her lap, and she remained still absorbed—lost in the vision, unconscious of the observation of those around her—unconscious that the look of one, who had scarcely deigned to see her since their first meeting, was fixed with interest upon her. For an instant only she remained thus, for Magdalene had the faculty of sure, if not quick self-recovery.

"Now tell us, Virginia," said the Judge, "why you chose that, by no means the best part of the poem?" asked the Judge, turning to Ginnie.

"Why, for this reason, father; because I liked it best. I have no gift for grandeur; but I do like something new and hopeful—like De Wilton's onslaught upon predestined fate just there! It is quite different from anything else we read in that line. I do think that generally, poets, dramatists, novelists, and tale writers, often quite thoughtlessly cause a great deal of unnecessary misery to such of their readers as may be naturally given to superstition."

"How, Virginia?" inquired the Judge, who loved to hear the little mentor talk, when she so far forgot herself as to do it.

"How, Virginia?" also inquired Joseph, earnestly.

"Why, by seizing the dark superstitions of the earth for artistic purposes, and endowing them with infallibility."

"As—for instance?"

"In novels, poems, plays—all omens, dreams, visions, presentiments, etc., are prophetic, and all prophecies fulfilled—thus these superstitions, endorsed by the authority of great minds, im-

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press very forcibly feeble ones, or even strong ones that happen to be very imaginative, and seriously affect their happiness. I know it from myself, and from one who loves me—from myself, because I was from novels and poems impressed with the *feeling*, rather than the opinion, that presentiments *had* to be fulfilled, until real life taught me that no presentiment of mine ever meant anything, as I never had one justified by the event in my life."

"Had you ever a presentiment, Virginia?" asked the Judge, smiling.

"Oh, yes, father!"

"Oh! let's hear it," said Sir Clinton.

"Why, even before the epidemic reached our plantation, I had a painful secret conviction, that *if* it should visit us, I, myself, should be among its first victims. I felt as nearly convinced, in my own mind, as any one could be of an error, and above all, I thought that this being a *presentiment, was obliged to be fulfilled.* I even made a little memorandum of my small personal effects, with the names of those to whom I wished to leave them, and locked it up in my writing desk. Nevertheless though I thought I was going to die, I did not wish to, and I recollected that our Lord was above everything, and could reverse fate, even fore-ordained fate, and so I prayed that I might not die, but that I might live the handmaiden of the Lord on earth—and so I *did* live, as you see. Besides, I have had other presentiments, and forebodings, and dreams, and evil omens, and never, in any instance, had them justified by what followed—so, at last, life has delivered me from the power of the dark superstitions into which poetry and romance had led me. But I do wonder, among the many objections, rational and irrational, that are made to romances, *this* never should have been advanced!"

"What do you say to all this, my Queen of Night?" inquired the Judge, turning smilingly to Magdalene.

"I think that the prophetic Vision of Dun Eden's Cross was very fearfully fulfilled on the fatal field of Flodden."

"So it was, in every instance, except—mark you, Magdalene—except in the case of the faithful De Wilton, who, when the phantom herald

"'Thundered forth a roll of names,'

Ending with

"'De Wilton erst of Aberlay,'

citing them to appear before the final tribunal; De Wilton replies,

"'Thy fatal summons I deny,
And thine infernal lord defy,
Appealing me to One on High
Who burst the sinner's chain.'

Now mark the result, Magdalene:

"'*At that dread accent with a scream,*
Parted the pageant like a dream;
The summoner was gone.'

The moral of all of which is, Meg, that the Lord is above the fiend."

"Which means," smiled the Judge, patting Ginnie's glistening red hair, "that the Lord is above the fiend, an observation equally profound and original, my little moralizer!"

"Ah, father, at least, some folks have to be reminded of some of its applications every day," replied Ginnie, shaking the aforesaid red head at her father.

Conversation now took a lighter tone, and became general. Virginia was the life principle of that little group around the fire, as she was of every circle, great or small, in which she chanced to be. Magdalene sat apart, half in shadow, and in her usual attitude of calm dignity, very still, yet with the sense of a new life, half of pain, half of pleasure, stirring in her heart. The little circle separated at an early hour.

Sir Clinton Carey remained at Prospect Hall during the next two months. He became the constant companion, or rather the vigilant supervisor and protector of Virginia, for his manner towards our ardent and volatile child was rather magisterial and paternal for so young a gentleman—so that the brightness, freshness, and elasticity of our Ginnie, sometimes faded, withered and drooped under the shadow of his wing—and then again with a light spring of her tiny foot and stately head, she would escape from him and run, romp, or rant by the hour. Joseph! superceded, lonely Joseph, fell deeper into trouble every day, and frequently when the gloom was deepest and darkest on his brow, Ginnie, no matter who might be present, would go to him, stand by him, place her hands upon his shoulder, and lean her bright head down upon him with such an air of affection, reliance, fidelity! Joseph, at such times, would occasionally pass his arm around her and press her to his bosom, but more frequently—*always* when others were present, he would gently put her from him, and leave the room. Magdalene! Slowly, strongly, as every other passion or emotion had ever arisen in her soul, flowed in the mighty tide of a first and all-absorbing love.

CHAPTER XII.

JOSEPH.

Of manners gentle, of affections mild,
In wisdom man, in innocence a child. *Pope.*

Joseph Carey confined himself almost exclusively to the library, perseveringly endeavoring to concentrate all the faculties of his mind upon

the study of the law. Bringing to the task an intellect of the highest order, having for a master so eminent a lawyer as Judge Washington, his prospects for success in his profession were very great. Perhaps had he felt free to choose, the court-house would never have been the chosen place of his labor. Perhaps the church might have been more congenial to his temperament. But his patron had suggested the law, and at once Joseph perceived that this was the most convenient profession that the Judge could bestow upon him, since it caused no expense of college education, boarding, books, etc. It required nothing but library room, with a little occasional verbal teaching on the part of his benefactor, while the good conferred upon himself at so little cost was immense. Besides, this plan gave Joseph the opportunity of manifesting his gratitude by performing for the Judge the duties of private secretary, and out-door man of business. Last—oh! not least, this arrangement retained Joseph still under the roof with Virginia—the fondly, madly, hopelessly beloved!

Joseph's relations to his patron, from earliest childhood, had been of such a filial character, that it never occurred to the poor boy to look upon himself as a nameless and penniless dependant. His feelings towards Virginia had been from their earliest infancy of so paternal a nature, that the vast distance between their social positions, did not suggest itself to his mind until the era of manhood revealed to him that the very vital fibres of his heart were indissolubly, eternally, fatally entwined with those of the partner of his cradle, the companion of his childhood, the pure love of his youth—Virginia! the enthusiasm, the worship, the madness!—yea! the madness of his maturity. Now he felt that for *her* was a brighter, higher destiny than any *he* could achieve for her, while for him remained, no matter what! no matter what! so that *she* were happy! *Now* his task was plain, to cut down and root up feelings that had dared to germinate and spring in his heart—yes! though that lacerated heart should bleed to death from the wounds! Virginia must not even suspect their existence. Virginia was a few years younger than himself—she had not as yet dreamed of other love than the deep, still love of father, sister, brother—and she must never know of another from him. When Virginia, troubled by *his* troubled countenance, would come and stand by his side, and pass her hand around his neck, and lay her head against him, so gently, so tenderly!—her innocent caress would send a shock of mingled ecstacy and agony through every nerve and vein to his heart's core! causing his heart to pause, his brain to reel, his eyes to dim, while the thought, the feeling of a perfect joy near, but impossible, would nearly madden him. Even then—"in the very torrent, tempest and whirlwind of passion," he exercised a matchless constancy and self-command. Yes! he even calmly and tenderly returned those pure caresses, for—with the instinct of true affection, he felt that any change, any chilling of his manner towards her, would, by the very sorrow it should cause her, tend to develope that new, strange phase of love—that anguish which tortured him—but which she must not know. He immured himself in the library among the law books, where he struggled with himself, prayed and tried to study. And none but the All-Seeing Eye beheld the written agony of the brow, the struggle, the prayer or the *motive*. But Virginia could not enjoy herself without her brother—she told everybody so—and often when a little party of pleasure was planned, she would run up into the library to draw him from his books. To her invitations he would reply something like this—

"You know, dear, that I cannot leave my studies now. I must read industriously. My day of grace is almost over. I must stand my examination this winter!'

"But oh, Joseph! you look so pale, so thin, so weary! You are killing yourself, Joseph, with all this plodding!"

A smile, wan as moonlight, illumined his spiritual countenance as he replied by a question,

"What was that line so often set you for a copy in your school days, Virginia?"

"Oh!—yes; 'Perseverance commands success.' Dear Joseph used to set it for me because I was such a flighty, volatile little elf! flying from one thing to another, and sticking to nothing long!"

"And do you know what perseverance means?"

"Why—persistence, I cannot think of any other synonyme now."

"I do not want the synonyme, but that for which the synonymes stand. 'Perseverance,' 'persistence' are no holiday words like 'success,' 'honor,' 'fame,' 'glory!' Perseverance—so soft and smooth upon our tongues, so hard and rough in our lives, Virginia! Perseverance means—with steady, patient, unflinching, untiring labor and efforts, day and night, summer and winter, in sunshine and in clouds, in prosperity and adversity, with the sympathy of appreciating friends, and in the solitude of a misunderstood heart, in health and in sickness, through good report and through evil report, in encouragement and in *dis*couragement, in fruition or in blight, in ease or in pain, in competence or in penury, in weakness and in strength, in shame or in glory—to pursue ONE OBJECT."

"And then?"

"Success, Ginnie!" exclaimed the young man, with "EXCELSIOR" sparkling all over his face.

"No, not *always*, not *often*, very seldom, in-

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deed! Ah, it is too true! We see it in the lives of all the great and good who have lived and suffered, toiled and persevered, and—*failed!*"

"They were not good and great *enough*, or else, despite our shortness of sight, and misapprehension of facts, and haste of judgment, they have *not* failed. No, Ginnie, *not* failed! by all the Christian promises!—by eternal justice, they have not!—Success, *earthly* success even, is for those energetic enough to work for it, hopeful enough to look for it, patient enough to wait for it, brave enough to seize it, strong enough to hold it!"

"But those others—those great and good souls who have lived, and labored, and persevered, and—*died*, with their work unaccomplished," said Ginnie, looking deep into his eyes, "those others that make me sad, Joseph; how useless their endeavor!—how hopeless! they have fallen and died at their task, and left it unfinished!"

"Not so! not so! if his work was great and good in its object, he has taken it to heaven to complete! Not so! for in the long struggle—though the physical energies may be worn out, and the earthly success utterly lost,—yet, in the struggle, the soul has gained great strength, great energy, great fortitude, a property of which she cannot be deprived by caprice, the injustice, or the persecution of the world, a good which has become a component part of herself,—that she takes into eternity with her—that is immortal—and *that*, dearest Virginia, is the moral of all the 'bootless endeavor' that so tries your faith in this world—and tries it only because you see the temporal blight and not the eternal bloom.—The seed sown here in tears, *perishes!*—but the germ springs, and the harvest is reaped in eternity! We have the promises, Virginia; sometimes they seem to fail, but it is only in seeming. The promises are kept when *we* are faithful—we know that they are, though we may not see *how*. How do we know, for instance, that a philanthropist, worn out with his labor of love, and passed away with half his good and great purposes unaccomplished, may not be permitted to inspire the mind of some faithful, strong, living man, who is fit for his work, albeit he may be quite unconscious of the source of his new and glorious thoughts?"

"That is very fanciful."

"But not improbable or unchristian. Ah!—Virginia, I often feel like ascribing all my purest and highest thoughts to the inspirations of a loving spirit, who passed away with her blessed work unfinished here, but to be accomplished from above!"

"My mother?" said Virginia, as, with her hands clasped on Joseph's knee, she sat and looked up wistfully into Joseph's face.

A long time she sat, while he rested his burning brow upon his hand, and looked down on her. At last she said,

"But to what tends all our serious discourse, Joseph? I only came to coax you to ride with me."

"And I, dearest Ginnie, did not mean to speak of any more exalted object of perseverance than my common-place calling of the law. I was led up higher, involuntarily. Now, coming down again, I say that if you wish to see your brother succeed in his profession, you must leave him in his study chair, and never tempt him forth. The weariness of study here, and the bright sunshine and fresh air without, is temptation enough, without your pleading, Virginia. And if you speak, it must be to exhort me to stay here."

After such a conversation as this, Virginia, thinking that she was interrupting his studies, would sigh, get up, press his head an instant against her bosom, and steal away from the room, feeling very, very lonesome. And Joseph! left alone, he would drop his head upon his hands, while shudder after shudder would shake his frame, as he wrestled with his own spirit, with his great temptation. How many there are, oh, God! who thus struggle, and suffer, and pray—in solitude, in silence—with no eye but Thine to read the "written agony" of the brow—no ear but Thine to hear the sob that has riven the heart in its outburst, no hand but Thine to raise, and heal, and comfort! These are Thine own. These are they to whose desolated spirits Thou comest. To whom, in the night season of their despair, Thou whisperest,—"My son, my daughter, be of good cheer!—sorrow endureth but for a night—the night of thy probation—joy cometh with the morrow—the morning of thy triumph over temptation—the morning of thy regeneration!"

One morning, a beating, driving rain kept all the family within doors, and immediately after breakfast, and after a last hasty glance through the windows at the dark descending flood, they all assembled in the drawing-room. The party gathered around the fire, consisted of Judge Washington, Sir Clinton Carey, Virginia, Magdalene, and Joseph, whom Ginnie insisted should abandon his books for the public good that day. No member of the family could be spared on that dark, rainy day, she said. Nor should any one look gloomy! The sky had monopolized all the gloom! They and the fire must be bright! And bright would everything have been if Ginnie could have lighted every body up—*but*—Sir Clinton challenged his cousin to a game of chess—and so, with the best grace she could command, she sat down to the table with him. Judge Washington was occupied with opening his mail and looking over papers and letters. Magdalene sat at a corner-stand mechanically drawing per

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sketches, but really "shadowed by her dream." Aye, Magdalene! dream on! live on in your maniac's paradise, drawing a keen and stealthy joy from the eyes that sometimes meet your own with such a world of meaning—dream on! wonder, hope, BELIEVE ON! for if an angel from Heaven warned you not to do so, his voice would be disregarded!

Joseph first struggled with the mood of melancholy that was coming upon him, and then tried to mask it under a cheerful countenance. In vain! his heart was sinking like a leaden weight, and drawing down all the muscles of his countenance—and if he tried to smile at any gay sally that Ginnie would launch at him to raise his spirits, it would be such a ghastly mockery of a smile! Ginnie played very boldly this morning, making "most admired disorder." Joseph longed for solitude, and at length he stepped away to his sanctuary—unobserved, he supposed—but it was not so; Judge Washington had noticed him. And Virginia, in five minutes from the time he had left the drawing room—having finished her game of chess—arose and followed him.

She opened the library door and found him in an attitude of the profoundest grief. She entered so softly that he was only made aware of her presence by her passing her arms gently around his neck, and drawing his head upon her bosom.

"Joseph, my dear brother! my only brother! what is the matter?"

He could not speak a falsehood, nor refuse to answer her, he replied—

"I am not very well, Ginnie!"

"I know you are not well, even in body—but there is something worse than that, Joseph! You are in deep trouble. Oh, tell me! dear old playmate, why can we not tell each other everything, as we used to do on the glistening, sandy beach of the Sunny Isle! It cannot be my cousin Clinton's supercilious behaviour, or his monopoly of my society? Oh, no! for my proud English cousin can never rival my dear brother in my esteem or affection, Joseph! and if I show him attentions, and accept attentions from him, it is only through the politeness and hospitality due to our guest; and, indeed, I fear, that in his especial case, I fall far short in the performance of these rites; for I so much dislike his supercilious manners. And I ask myself testily—'Who is he indeed, but a beggared and expatriated Englishman, with nothing but his barren title, his pride, and his hetrodoxy; expatriated by his own ultra republican opinions, and, I very much suspect by his religious and political skepticism generally, which must cut him off from advancement in his own country. Grandfather does not see all! he sees only just so much of his Liberalism as he permits to be visible, and so far grandfather heartily agrees with him and approves him. Magdalene does not care for it. Magdalene is carried captive by the dark majestic melo-dramatic presence, and the splendid talents and brilliant conversational powers of the man, and thinks him a very magnificent fellow altogether. But *I* see it! I *feel* it! It requires a red-haired girl like me to do it! He does not reverence anything that *we* reverence, Josey! He holds nothing sacred that gives us support and shelter, Josey! Always in his presence I am troubled by emotions of fear for myself and those I love, from his influence or through his agency, and a vague resentment *towards* him, striving with a deep compassion *for* him! Believe me, I have him aright! And if grandfather does not see the *whole* of this, it is because he is not always with Clinton as *I* am, in his free and easy moments, or those moments in which he approaches nearest to freedom and ease!"

During all this time, Joseph let her talk on, well pleased that she should talk and save him the embarrassment of further home questions. But Virginia had not lost the thread of her discourse—she resumed it—

"So you see, Joseph, that I really do not esteem this man, and indeed, my fear is, that my attentions to this man, slight and imperfect as they are—and *necessary* as they are—savor of hypocrisy! But it is not his monopoly of me that troubles you?"

"No, dearest Virginia, it is not indeed! Be at ease, dear sister, no misfortune has befallen me, nor do I anticipate any."

"Ah! you say that! but look at your haggard face! Joseph, I wish you would speak to me freely. I deserve it of you, indeed I do!" she said, again passing her arms around his neck, and drawing his head down upon her bosom.

Her tears were falling, and her face was bowed over him, and his arm encircled her, and so they remained a minute, when Joseph, first recovering himself, put her gently off, and looked up—to behold Judge Washington standing over them. Surprise, regret, but no anger was visible upon his venerable face. Joseph was composed, and as for Virginia, she was not the least startled by the sudden apparition of her grandfather.

"Virginia," he said, "the cook wants to consult you, my love. Order something spicy for dinner, dear, for it is very damp and cold."

"Grandfather! Joseph is in trouble—get Joseph to confide in you, will you?" she said, pressing Joseph's hand before she left the room.

The Judge sank heavily into a chair on the opposite side of the table, and leaning upon it, said,

"Joseph! there is not, I am sure, a feeling in that heart of thine, or a thought in that brain of thine, of which thou need'st be afraid or ashamed to speak. Joseph, canst thou confide in me?"

"Yes! I *can* confide in you, mine honored patron—and my confidence will also be a confession. Judge Washington, I love Virginia!—with

a deeper and a fiercer love than that of a brother! I have never permitted her to see it! She does not surmise it!—she never shall from me!"

"No. That is right. You know you can never marry Virginia, Joseph! Let me speak to you with the utmost candor, my young friend. Virginia Carey Washington represents in herself two of the largest estates in Eastern Virginia. Sir Clinton Carey is the present head of the elder branch of the Carey family. It was ever the wish of the late Colonel Carey to unite the two branches of his house again. Sir Clinton Carey is in every respect a suitable match for Miss Washington, and he is here with my full consent and approbation to win the heart and hand of Virginia, if possible. I have said nothing of this to any one, not even to Virginia, lest by seeming to direct her choice thither, I should prejudice her against her suitor. I shall never constrain the will of my grand-daughter in this respect, though I confess that I heartily desire the marriage—but however that plan may eventuate, Joseph, my dear boy, it is but in mercy to you, while with great pain to myself, that I tell you that you must abandon the thought of ever, under any possible circumstances, possessing the hand of Miss Washington."

"Believe me, sir, I never gave an instant's harbor to any such mad hope."

"She loves you more tenderly than she loves any one else on earth, Joseph, but it is with the fond affection of a sister for an only brother. The nature of that affection must not, as it might —*be changed*."

"I know it, sir!—direct me!—I am at your disposal."

"In a few days, Joseph, we go to Richmond, to be in time for the meeting of the Legislature, and the sitting of the court—I wish, also, to congratulate my old friend, Governor *Mountjoy, on his election, and for an especial reason to present my grand-daughter and her friend at his opening levee. You will of course go with us, Joseph. You will pass your examination triumphantly, I doubt not. You will be admitted to the bar, where you shall have my best interest to push you on. But on returning with my family to Sunny Isle, whither I shall go in the Spring—I shall leave you in Richmond. There, Joseph, you must give yourself up wholly to your profession, and so forget Virginia. You must not see her again until you have done so. Look your destiny bravely in the face, and consider this, that of all men and women who love in the world, not one in ten thousand get the object of their first passionate attachment—and perhaps it is well for them that they do not."

Judge Washington stopped—looked with deep compassion upon the pale face of the young man, pressed his cold hand, and with a "*God bless you, Joseph,*" left the room, feeling grieved and remorseful, as though he had just drawn the black cap off his head, after saying—"You shall be taken from hence to the prison from whence you came, and from thence to the place of execution, where you shall be hanged by the neck until you are dead—dead—dead. *And may the Lord have mercy on your soul!*"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GOVERNOR'S LEVEE.

In the vast city with its peopled homes,
And hearts all full of an immortal life,
And busy merchants hurrying to and fro,
And curious travellers with thoughtful mien;
Grave men of wealth, and inexperienced youth,
Learning his lesson from the sordid page.

Mrs. Ellis.

Judge Washington owned a handsome dwelling in one of the most fashionable streets of Richmond. Early in the fall he had written to his agent there to have the mansion opened, renovated, and furnished for the reception of his family by the first of December. It was now ready, and he prepared to dispatch, in advance of his family, and under the charge of Joseph Carey, a staff of house servants.

A week after the party left Prospect Hall, the Judge, Sir Clinton, Virginia and Magdalene, occupying the four seats of the capacious family carriage, set out for the Capital.

They arrived at their town-house late on a fine clear winter's night, and found a sumptuous supper prepared under the auspices of Mistress Polly Pepper, awaiting them.

The next morning the Judge left his address and his daughter's card at the homes or hotels of all his oldest and most valued friends, resident or now sojourning in the Capital; and in a few days thereafter their house began to be besieged with calls, invitations to dinners, to parties, &c. Miss Washington, or Miss Carey Washington, as she was most frequently called, being the greatest heiress of the State, was, of course, voted the beauty of the season. Rumor, with some reason certainly, promised her hand to her English cousin, Sir Clinton Carey, upon whom the same gossip, with less truth, bestowed an immense patrimonial estate in Hertfordshire, England. Very eagerly did our vivacious child enter into the new life of the city—her mornings were passed in seeing sights—such sights as the city afforded—in shopping, in consulting milliners and dress

* *To the hyper-critics.* ASTUTE FRIENDS: the author, in introducing such a dignitary as a Governor into her pages, has taken the liberty of *changing his name*.—E. S.

makers, in making and receiving calls, and her evenings at parties, balls, concerts, plays, &c.—Very much in danger would Virginia have been of being spoiled by adulation and dissipation, but for her excellence of heart, and simplicity and frankness of manners. On the shopping expeditions, to the sight-seeing, to the concerts, plays, &c., Magdalene went with Virginia, but *nowhere else*. Magdalene distinctly and decidedly refused to accompany Miss Washington in making calls, and doubtless it was for that reason that no cards were left for the former, and that her name was never included in the invitations extended to the other members of the family. This was a great drawback to Virginia's happiness. She would never have ceased expostulating with Magdalene upon the subject, but that Judge Washington said—

"She is right, my dear! wait until the Governor's levee, when I shall present you and Magdalene together to General Mountjoy. He will immediately recognize his grand-daughter, by her likeness to the family. As *my* ward, with *my* introduction, my daughter's companionship, and Magdalene's remarkable beauty, grace, and dignity, she must, I think, find favor in his sight. I do not wish her known by name *in society* until her presentation—then, if her grandfather acknowledges her, she will have the proudest name, and the first rank in the city."

"But, father, by what name will you present Magdalene?"

"By that to which she has the best right."

"Will Magdalene consent to this? You know how tightly she grips that grim patronymic —'Hawk.'"

"I do not think it necessary to consult my ward in this matter."

"Grandfather!"

"Well, Ginnie?'

"If Governor Mountjoy should not notice her?"

"Then she remains *my* child."

"Oh! best, most honored! dearest father!—how I thank you!—but in that case, father, let us return to Prospect Hall again. I cannot! oh, I cannot enjoy a world that casts out my innocent, my noble-minded sister!"

"We do not know that General Mountjoy will fail to acknowledge his grand-daughter—I do not think so."

"I hope not. Generally I am *very* sanguine, but yet—in this case—I do not know how it is I feel sad and anxious."

The day of the levee approached. Judge Washington had signified to Magdalene his wish that she should be presented with his daughter to General Mountjoy, and Magdalene had bowed acquiescence. Virginia's little head was filled to aching with milliners, mantua-makers, velvets, satins, laces, feathers, jewels,—but not for herself—for Magdalene! She was so anxious that Magdalene should triumph.

Virginia wished Magdalene to wear a rich white satin, with a light tiara of diamonds on her head, and offered for the purpose her own brilliants to be reset. But Magdalene, with a grave smile, declined shining in borrowed jewels—and wore only the rich white satin, trimmed with fine lace, and no head-dress but the heavy, glossy bands of her own magnificent black hair.

"Indeed, Lena, you are superb, empress-like! goddess-like! I am glad you did not take the diamonds! A jewel would desecrate the statuesque majesty of your presence."

"I have to remind you every day, that you are an extravagant little enthusiast, Virginia," replied Magdalene.

Virginia wore a white crape, with her golden red hair in many glistening spiral ringlets, and a band of oriental pearls around her forehead.

One other looked upon Magdalene with enthusiastic but silent admiration. Sir Clinton Carey, who often meeting her eyes in one long, long burning gaze—expressive of all that her profound heart chose to translate—turned, gave his arm to Virginia to conduct her to the carriage, and noticed Magdalene no more that evening. Judge Washington led Magdalene. They drove to the Gubernatorial mansion. The street before the house was crowded with carriages, the windows of the mansion blazing with light. A band of music sounded from the saloon. Our party alighted and went in. After arranging their toilettes in the cloak-room, they entered the reception-chamber. Magdalene resting upon the arm of Judge Washington, and Virginia on that of Sir Clinton Carey. The room was crowded with a brilliant company, through which they made their way with some difficulty, to the presence of the Governor. General Mountjoy was standing near one end of the room, the centre of a group of civil and military officers, "both hearing and asking them questions." Not far distant from him, and the cynosure of neighboring eyes, sat his fair twin nieces, Viola and Violet, chaperoned by their mother, Mrs. Swan, a fair and stately lady, the present mistress of the mansion-house. On drawing near the Governor, Judge Washington bowed with profound gravity, and taking the hand of Magdalene, said,

"General Mountjoy, allow me the honor of presenting to your excellency, my ward, Miss Mountjoy, of our county."

Magdalene cast down her eye-lids, and curtsied deeply, before raising her eyes to meet those of her grandfather. There was a slight start of surprise and displeasure—a quick, penetrating glance into the brilliantly beautiful face of his grand-daughter, and then the Governor,

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with a suave and stately courtesy, expressed himself happy to see Miss Mountjoy—no more.

The Judge then presented, "My daughter, Miss Carey Washington," and "Sir Clinton Carey, of Hertfordshire, England." And that ceremony over, our party paid their respects to Mrs. Swan and her daughters, and passed off to the saloon, where a band of music was in full operation, and where several waltzing couples were on the floor. Magdalene had heard Judge Washington present her as Miss Mountjoy, with great astonishment, but with her incomparable self-possession, she had not betrayed the slightest surprise. As they passed through the crowded saloon, Judge Washington drew the arm of his ward with affectionate *empressement* closer within his own, and stooping, whispered to her,

"Magdalene, my child, twenty people heard and saw your presentation this evening—now, however this may eventuate, I shall insist, my dear, upon your bearing your proper patronymic," and pressing her hand, he led her on. He found a seat for Magdalene, and like her true knight, remained by her side. The rumor had spread through the rooms, that that superb woman presented by Judge Washington, was Miss Mountjoy, a near relative of the Governor, and so it fell out that while the Judge attended Magdalene, many were the applications to him to be presented to his beautiful ward, and soon Judge Washington bowed and left Magdalene surrounded by a group of his own most valued friends.

Virginia was waltzing with Sir Clinton—but as soon as the waltz was over, she desired to be taken to her sister Magdalene. No sooner had "Miss Washington" taken a seat beside "Miss Mountjoy," than the circle about the two beauties, very greatly enlarged, and the former introduced all her own acquaintances to the latter. Seeing his ladies so well amused, Judge Washington withdrew from the saloon to re-enter the reception-room, and join the circle immediately around the Governor.

"What sort of an evening has it seemed to you, Lena?" inquired Virginia, when they had reached home.

"It should have been a rather pleasant evening! There were several persons who should have been rather agreeable."

"And with what a majestic weariness you say that! Yet it is proper! You *looked* like an empress, or rather as an empress should look, to-night! You held a court of the most eminent men and the most fashionable women of the Capital around you—and you say, in comment on the homage—'some persons *should have been* rather agreeable!' *I* have been caressed very much—but I tell you, Lena, that had I received one-half the homage that has been wasted upon you this evening, it would have turned my head, quite! Why, Lena! you were 'the star of that goodly company'—'the observed of all observers'—'the glass of fashion, and the mould of form.' Why, Lena, you have set the fashion; the statuesque simplicity of your dress this evening, will banish jewels, ringlets, flounces, furbeloes, and all other fineries, from all the ballrooms of this season. You have succeeded, Magdalene! You have 'made a sensation,' not a fussy sensation, like a giddy flirt, but a deep, admiring one; like—*yourself*. And in reference to all this triumph, you only say, with an august *ennui*, 'It *should have been* a pleasant evening!'"

"Dear Virginia, it is better to tell you the truth, than to leave you to suspect me of such absurd affectation. Well, then, with all its successes, the evening was a very anxious one to me; with the thought of General Mountjoy, and the construction he might be pleased to place upon the circumstance of my introduction to him. You, also, dearest Ginnie—you who enter into all my disquietudes with more feeling than I would willingly permit—you frequently betrayed the uneasiness that *I* felt without betraying."

"Yes! it is true! I felt very anxious, but oh, there can be no doubt he will call upon you to-morrow!" said Virginia, earnestly.

"Perhaps so, dearest Ginnie. Now go to bed, my own darling, for these late hours are beginning to dim the sparkling brilliancy of your complexion, Ginnie."

And so Magdalene embraced, and dismissed her. And she herself retired "to bed, but not to sleep." Anxiety, anxiety which humbled her in her own eyes, kept her awake. What wild hopes were hers! hopes for which she half despised herself, even while encouraging them. The next day! What would the next day bring forth? Should her grandfather seek her, acknowledge her—how changed would be her real position! *then* the high rank, she had as it were *usurped* that evening, would be hers by hereditary right. If he should not, very soon would her unfortunate position be understood, and the world that had rendered its homage to her to-day, would cast its contempt upon her to-morrow. Yet not for the world's distinctions was Magdalene alone anxious. No; underneath all these things, was that motive that she scarcely dared to look into—which, perhaps, she did not really suspect—which she could not have contemplated with any remnant of self-respect. Shall I strip aside the veil, and reveal proud Magdalene's humiliating secret to the reader? It was the latent hope that Sir Clinton Carey, who, while doing silent homage to the beauty and genius—evidently despised the position of Magdalene Hawk, would honor the rank of Miss

Mountjoy. "Proud Magdalene" had no pride for him.

No, Magdalene had no pride for him. The prejudices of his aristocratic education, the haughtiness of his heart, the superciliousness of his manners gave her no offence. That deportment which, in another person, would have repulsed her at once and forever, in him, by a strange fatality, attracted her constantly. The secret was, perhaps, *this*:—Magdalene had a high self-appreciation, great personal pride, and in her heart she felt that this arrogant Englishman valued her as highly as she estimated herself—that it was only her *position* he despised, and in her perfect justice she excused him of this, because *she despised it herself*. She felt, too, that those two passions, which were fast becoming the masters of her soul, were indivisible—that she could not have loved with all her heart, one who did not meet her aspirations after social eminence.

Magdalene arose late in the morning. She found the family assembled in the breakfast room, and only waiting for her appearance before sitting down to the discussion of their coffee, muffins, etc. Soon after breakfast, Virginia, attended by Sir Clinton Carey, went out to fulfil an engagement; she had previously invited Magdalene to go with her, but Magdalene, ruled by a wild, irrational hope, preferred to remain at home. Judge Washington and Joseph, or Mr. Carey, as we should call him, were engaged in the study of the former. Magdalene was the only occupant of the drawing-room, and through the long hours of the day she watched and waited with a sickening heart. Every carriage that approached the house, every knock at the door aroused her expectation, and then disappointed her. It was, now, cards left for Miss Washington and *Miss Mountjoy*, and now a footman, or a gentleman coming on business to Judge Washington.

Virginia returned late in the afternoon, asked one hurried question of the servants, received an answer in the negative, then sought Magdalene in her chamber, and silently and fervently embraced her. A week previous, Virginia had been invited to a party that was to come off this evening. She now proposed to send an excuse and remain at home, to pass the evening with Magdalene. But Magdalene would not consent to this arrangement. The Judge himself disapproved it, and so Virginia went, attended, as usual, by Sir Clinton Carey. Magdalene passed another sleepless night, and another anxious day. The next morning being the third after the night of the Governor's reception, Virginia remained at home with Magdalene. The hour was early, and they had not yet "dressed to receive calls," when a servant came up stairs and placed two cards in the hands of Miss Washington. Virginia looked at them with surprise and displeasure.—They bore upon their enamelled surface the names of—MRS. SWAN, THE MISSES SWAN; Magdalene's near relatives, and yet no card had been left for *her*. Virginia impatiently cast the cards into the grate, where they were soon shrivelled up in the flames, and burst into tears of mingled grief and rage. To all Magdalene's inquiries, and efforts at soothing her, Virginia answered not a word, but—"I am sick and tired!' yes! disgusted and worn out! with this city life. I wish to return to Prospect Plains!" and this, with trifling variations, she repeated some twenty times, while sobbing passionately. And when her fit of crying was quite over, and she had wiped her eyes, she said,

"Yes, indeed, Meg, I am weary of English baronets, and Governor's nieces, and Senator's ladies, and 'lighted halls,' and sounding music, and nodding plumes, and glistening jewels, and dressing, and visiting, and balls, and levees, and concerts, and plays, on and off the stage, and feverish nights, and languid mornings!—oh! very, very weary indeed! If Satan does not angle for my soul with some more attractive bait than 'society,' he well never get it, surely! I want to go back to the country, to old father Hawk, and Bruin, and Gulliver, and the negroes, and the poultry. Oh! how I wish this 'winter in town,' which *smells* so of lamp oil and musk, which they call light and perfume, as if it were sunshine and violets! and *tastes* so of rancid cream and stale eggs, disguised with essences, which they call 'ices!' and *looks* so like Vanity Fair! and *feels* so like—nay, I have no similie for what it *feels* like!"

Virginia resolved that she would not, at any one's request, return the call of Mrs. Swan and her daughters.

The next week the fashionable world at Richmond were thrown into great excitement by the rumor of a ball to be given at the gubernatorial mansion, and in the course of a few days notes of invitation arrived for Judge Washington, Miss Washington, Sir Clinton, and Mr. Carey—*none for Magdalene*. Upon this occasion Virginia wished to send an apology for declining the invitation, but the Judge said to her—

"We cannot, my love, do anything for Magdalene by resenting this—a slight put upon her most likely by the jealous fears of the *ladies* of the family, who would at once lose their rank in the household, and perhaps their dowers too, were the Governor to acknowledge and take home his only grand-daughter, Miss Mountjoy. No, General Mountjoy received Magdalene with favor, I think—he has been immersed in business for days past, he knows nothing of this neglect on the part of the ladies of his family. To-morrow the Governor leaves town, not to return until the day of the ball,—which you must attend,

Virginia; but after that I will myself call on him on Magdalene's behalf."

Very reluctantly Virginia consented to attend this ball. Very regretful she felt to leave Magdalene—now so grave and stern—at home. Before setting out, she came in, looking beautiful and brilliant in her light blue satin dress, with a wreath of white rose-buds in pearl and emeralds, encircling her graceful head. She cast her arms around Magdalene, and pressing her to her bosom, said—

"If I go, Magdalene, it is for your sake, indeed it is. I would not offend those proud Swans. General Mountjoy has just got home, and father intends to wait upon him to-morrow, for the purpose of having an interview with him! Oh! you know, Magdalene, that no one can withstand Judge Washington in a good cause! You know that it was mainly attributable to my father's—your guardian's great exertions, that General Mountjoy was elected. So, you see, a word from him must—! Oh! Magdalene, I shall yet see Miss Mountjoy placed above all these people who have dared to slight her! Good-night, dear Magdalene!" and kissing her, Ginnie vanished from the room.

Magdalene's hopes were raised again. Could her grandfather fail to be influenced by the opinion of so esteemed a man, and the advice of so valuable a political adherent as Judge Washington? Yet he might! What would "to-morrow" —the second "to-morrow" of her great anxiety develope? It was not social position alone—it was all her soul's dearest hopes that were at stake. Again the night was passed without rest, and Magdalene arose from her bed excited, fevered, almost ill.

Judge Washington kept his promise in going to see General Mountjoy, and the long hours of his absence were passed in the greatest anxiety by Magdalene and Virginia. It was near noon when he returned, with a grave and disappointed expression of countenance. Virginia sprang to meet him; opened her mouth to speak to him; but the Judge, placing his hand upon her lips, stopped her, and passing up to Magdalene, took her hand, bent and kissed her brow, and said—

"I have undisputed possession of you now, Magdalene. You are henceforth my daughter."

That was all that was ever said of his interview with Governor Mountjoy.

CHAPTER XIV.

PARTING.

And canst thou think because we part
Till some brief months have flown;
That absence e'er can change a heart
Which years have made thine own?

The end of the season approached. Joseph had passed a triumphant examination, and had been admitted to practice at the bar. Judge Washington had presented him to many of his friends, men of great influence; he had also taken for him a suit of handsomely furnished rooms in a private lodging house kept by the widow of one of his own old classmates, and thus having seen him in every way comfortably provided, he prepared to take his family back to Prospect Plains. Virginia, from the first, had heard that they were to leave Joseph in town, but Ginnie was predisposed to merriment and happiness and the bright side of things, occupied with many novelties, and interested in Magdalene's fortunes, so she did not anticipate any trouble so far off as the parting with Joseph at the end of the season. When this parting came, however—when the cart packed with the strapped and corded trunks, and drawn by stout mules, had rolled away from the back gate of the house, and the carriage was drawn up before the front door, the family in travelling dresses were assembled in the hall, and Joseph standing there, the only one to be left behind—Virginia took leave of him at first with little show of emotion; but after Magdalene had kissed him, the Judge and Sir Clinton Carey had shaken hands with him, and she herself was about to be handed into the carriage, Ginnie suddenly broke away, flew back, cast her arms around the neck of Joseph, and, regardless of all eyes upon her, buried her face in his bosom, and gave way to a violent burst of grief. Joseph raised his eyes once to Judge Washington, as much as to say, "Let me! trust me!" and then folded Ginnie in his arms and pressed his lips upon her brow.

"Come, my love," said the Judge, when a full minute had elapsed, and—

"Good-bye, dearest sister," said Joseph, trying gently to put her away; but Ginnie buried her face in his bosom and clung desperately around his neck—now realizing, for the first time, what it was to part with Joseph.

"Come, come, my dear child," said the Judge a second, a third time, before Ginnie, amid convulsive sobs, whispered to Joseph,

"Take me to the carriage yourself, I am getting so weak! Put me in, Joseph! Don't leave me till the carriage rolls off. Then stand in the door until it is out of sight, and I will look from the window as long as I can see you, dearest Joseph!"

Joseph lifted her in his arms and set her within the carriage.

"God bless you, Joseph! Oh! *God bless you, Joseph!*" she said fervently, and this she repeated many times aloud, while waving her handkerchief from the window as long as she could see him, and many times in her heart, after the carriage had rolled out of the city. Virginia fell back in the corner of the carriage and wept be-

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hind her veil. Magdalene held and pressed her hand from time to time, but abstained from other attempts at soothing her. Judge Washington and Sir Clinton Carey from delicacy, policy, or both, refrained from noticing her, but entered into some earnest, political conversation, carried on in a low tone. At the little town of Warsaw, where they stopped to dine, Ginnie could eat nothing. At Heathville, where they stopped to sup and to sleep, Ginnie entered her chamber, leaning heavily upon the arm of Magdalene; upon whose bosom she lay awake and weeping all night. To all Magdalene's words of condolence and consolation, she would answer—

"Oh! Lena! I did not know how it would be till I felt it! I did not *dread it!* but now I feel as if one half my life was gone! My whole heart and frame is sinking, Lena, and my head throbs so dreadfully! Is there anything in the world worth so much suffering?"

The next morning her eyes were highly inflamed, and her temples hot and the veins beating fast and full. Judge Washington was alarmed. He could not at first decide whether to remain where they were for the present, or to hurry home with all possible expedition. He determined on the latter course, as they were within a short day's journey of Prospect Plains. They arrived early in the evening of the fifth of March, and Virginia was lifted from the carriage and conveyed immediately to bed. Dr. McArthur was sent for, but, as is usual, when a physician is much needed in the country, he could not be found. All night long Judge Washington and Magdalene watched by the bedside of Ginnie, whose brain struggled fearfully between reason and frenzy. She would fall into a fitful, feverish sleep, and hear loved tones in her dreams, and starting out of them would ask—

"Was that Joseph who spoke? Have we turned back? Are we at *home?* (*the city house was home now,*) and then a burst of violent sorrow would prove that full reason had for the moment returned. In the morning Dr. McArthur came, and by his skillful treatment, the fever was abated, and the threatened imflammation of the brain prevented.

"This will soon be over, sir! These ardent and sanguine temperaments, who feel and express emotion so violently at first, soon expend their force and recover. Your little daughter will not kill herself now, as she has not done it already," said Dr. McArthur to the Judge, who had made a confidant of him.

The event proved his words to be true. Yet Virginia was confined some days to her room—during which time, Sir Clinton Carey had received letters, that summoned him to an interview with the British Minister, at Washington; and he now intimated his intended departure.

Magdalene! The stream of her external life had flowed on tediously and motononously enough for the last two or three months, since her rejection by her grandfather. But hurriedly, troubledly, continually passing through new, various, most bitter, and humiliating experiences, and making new revelations, had thundered the onward current of her soul.

Magdalene stood before her easel, but her subject, "The Death of Marmion," did not grow beneath her hand. She mused—What could be the meaning of Sir Clinton Carey's singular manner towards her? Her experience in life, nor her reading, gave her a solution of the mystery. His manner towards her was that of an absolute neglect, or oversight. Even in Richmond, he had never noticed any word or act of hers—never addressed his conversation to her—never by word or gesture, given the slightest recognition of her existence; yet—how often in the drawing-room, even when it was full of people, and he and she were separated by the width of the apartment, would she meet his dark eyes fixed full upon hers with—what language? How much they said! What love, what reverence, what confidence they expressed and inspired! How distinctly, how forcibly, how eloquently, those eyes said—"Believe in me, Magdalene! I love you! I venerate you! but I must not seem to see you! Aye, Magdalene! wonder at me, if you will but believe in me! love me!" Thus she read them, and so she dreamed and wondered, and believed, and loved. The very inexplicability was the maze that drew the imagination and the heart of the doomed girl, more swiftly, surely, fatally, into the whirlpool. She abandoned herself to the delirium of this new joy of life. She knew her own pride and ambition—she knew his unbending arrogance; yet excited and intoxicated, blinded and bewildered, she never feared how all this might end. Her plans were all foregone now. There was no more ennui; no more emptiness, weariness of life; no more vague longings after—she knew "not what;" no! all feelings, thoughts, desires, hopes, ambitions, aspirations, were merged in one great want, love! "Oh, yes!" she thought, "I *have* wanted many things—wealth, luxury, rank, fame! but now, now I wish for nothing but love! one exclusive love! the whole heart's love of one man. All wants are swallowed up in that! And despite his icy, stubborn indifference—despite his studied neglect and scorn, I *must* win it! I *will win* it! Oh, hungering and thirsting—yes! starving and fainting for this love—I *will* have it, though it were the very forbidden fruit, whose taste is death! Ah, to be loved once! to be loved once exclusively, even though to die with the memory in my heart!"

During the last few days of his stay at Prospect Plains, his conduct had become still more inexplicable. His manner from being merely ne-

glectful, had become coolly, quietly insolent. He even called her "Magdalene"—not affectionately as the bosom friend of his cousin, but superciliously, as he would have called Miss Washington's maid "Coral." Nay, more—he asked small services of her with perfect *non-chalance*—as, to hand him his gloves, hat, or cane, and would frequently offend Virginia—who was now able to come down stairs and take a walk in the middle of the day—by sending Magdalene for Miss Washington's shawl, or bonnet, etc. Even this cool impudence did not offend, discourage, or daunt Magdalene. I repeat, that she had no pride where her affections were concerned. It is written "Perfect love casteth out fear." It is true also, that perfect love casteth out pride, as well. She felt, besides, that she was quite worthy of him—that he must love her when he knew her well—that he must love her even as she loved him, when he should know her mind and heart, as they could only be known in the intimacy of domestic life. All this time, with that refined intuitive tact which is not guile, but which so closely resembles it—that exquisite tact by which some women are enabled to mould themselves to the ideal standard set up by the man they love; Magdalene appeared, or really became the model of all that Clinton Carey most worshipped in woman. Nevertheless his manner towards her, as I said, became daily more arrogant and inexplicable—and indeed, it was only by his seeming indifference, that Magdalene could maintain her self-possession at all; for if he chanced to speak to her in a softened tone, her heart trembled, her voice failed, and her whole face was suffused with blushes.

The day at length came for Sir Clinton Carey's departure. He had taken leave of the family the night previous, in order to set out before sunrise to meet the stage at St. Leonard's. Since Virginia's illness, Magdalene had had exclusive superintendence of household affairs, and was usually the first one astir of the family. Upon this morning, she had risen by daybreak, for two reasons—firstly, because she had not slept all night, and secondly, because, away down in the bottom of her heart, unguessed—at least unconfessed by herself—lurked a wish to see Sir Clinton Carey once more before his departure. She entered the wainscoted, crimson-furnished parlor which, from its light oak pannels and thick curtains, as well as by the remaining fire of the previous night, was comfortably warm, though dark and obscure. Magdalene stood upon the hearth, with her brow bent forward, and resting upon the mantel-piece, in that attitude of sombre thought peculiar to herself. The servants were not yet astir, the house was very quiet, when she heard the door swing gently open, a step advance into the room, and Sir Clinton Carey was beside her. She had expected, wished for his entrance, yet now a consciousness of that wish, like a feeling of guilt, oppressed her,—she, the strong and self-possessed, turned sick with faintness and fear, as she raised her eyes to his countenance, and bowed her morning salutation.—What was in that countenance to send all the blood from her cheek, and bring it back again in a rush? He looked at her in the face a moment, intently, and, dropping upon one knee, took her hand. Yes! *he*, the arrogant, coldly-contemptuous man, whose scorn of her had, more than any thing else on earth, galled her proud spirit with a sense of her humiliating position—he was kneeling at her feet, holding her hands, raising his eyes to hers with such a soul of earnestness—yes, of *agony*, piercing through their fire!

"Magdalene!" he said, and the very *tone* of music, of eloquence, spoke volumes,—"Magdalene!"

She was very much agitated, her voice utterly failed her, after saying,

"Rise! oh, rise!" while she impulsively closed her hands upon his, as though she would have lifted him. He only dropped his head an instant upon those hands, and shuddered through every limb.

"Magdalene! my Worship! my Terror!"

"Up, up, for Heaven's sake, up!" she struggled to say.

"Nay, my Queen, nay!" he said, lifting up his head. "Even *here* will I make my confession! *here*, at the feet of her whom I have worshipped, seeming to scorn! Magdalene! from the first moment I met you—do you remember it?—it was not in what might be called a picturesque or an interesting position—it was in the evening, in the drawing-room, before the lamps were lighted; you were standing before the fire, but had stooped to tie your shoe, or, perhaps, to pick up something, when I approached you—raising your eyes, they met mine in a first full gaze—and, Magdalene, those full dark eyes of thine struck at once the whole "electric cord" of my being—I trembled to the very centre of my heart! It was so dark that you could not see it! You spoke and welcomed me, and, Magdalene, your voice had the same strange, thrilling spell as that of your glance! Since that, Magdalene, my whole being has tended strongly, irresistibly, fatally, towards *you!* Magdalene, I sought, by avoidance of you, by repulsion of you, to counteract, or, at least, to weaken, the centripetal power of your spirit over mine. Magdalene, I have dared to look on you, to speak to you but few times during our acquaintance, and even *then* my whole soul has been shaken as by a storm. Yet ever, Magdalene, have you been at my side—sleeping, waking, by night, by day, have you haunted, maddened me! Magdalene! my Destiny! I was about to depart and make no

sign! *You* have willed it otherwise. Be it so! But now listen! It is vainer than vanity!—my love and yours! I am poor, even *very* poor, Magdalene! My Christian father, offended by my freedom of thought and opinion, disinherited me as far as he could, and left the whole of his estate to my younger brother—leaving me only the barren title of which he could not deprive me. Yes, Magdalene! I am poor, and so are you! I am ambitious, and so are you! We must *both* reach eminence, or, rather, you and I must *each* 'achieve greatness,' but not *together!* Magdalene! much as we love each other—for I will not affect ignorance of *your* heart—much as we love each other, we should be each fatal to the ambition of the other!"

During this speech, Magdalene had assumed that sovereign self-possession which none but he possessed the power of disturbing. Withdrawing her hand, she was about to say, "Sir Clinton, I thank you for your candor," but, meeting his eyes, so eloquent with love, sorrow and reverence, she said, as speaking beside herself—for how else should she have forgotten her maidenly reserve—she said, softly,

"I think you are mistaken; why should we not command success together? If it were not so—if each can only succeed apart from the other—is not the price of such success too high to pay?"

"That is the logic of youth and womanhood, dearest Magdalene!"

"It is truth!"

"Perhaps so; yet a truth you would hate me for following, ten years hence! And, Magdalene," he said, turning very pale, "I am affianced to another!"

Magdalene clenched her hands, and compressed her lips, and her brow became livid, as she said,

"Then, *why* this address to me?"

"Why did you throw yourself in my way this morning, Magdalene? Nay, do not reply—we were both impelled by a power stronger than our own sense of right!"

"*I* was not—you must know this," said Magdalene, making a great effort to subdue her emotions, and speak clearly; "you *must* understand this! I am incapable of doing any thing I believe to be wrong! My bosom's judge acquits me in this instance! But you—you are pledged to another, yet you do not love her!"

"No—I love only Magdalene!"

"Does your betrothed love you?"

"No, she loves another!"

"Both false or both inconstant!" said Magdalene, bitterly.

"Thou child! this engagement was concluded upon by others, before we had ever seen each other."

The countenance of Magdalene cleared.

"Does *she* know of this betrothal?"

"No."

Magdalene's brow was irradiated—she was about to speak, when the door opened, and, Prince appearing within it, said,

"I beg your pardon, sir, but your horse has been saddled half-an-hour, and the stage leaves St. Leonard's at seven o'clock."

"Not a moment to lose, Magdalene! Farewell!—farewell!" he said, pressing her hand to his lips an instant, and then he was gone.

Her face was radiant, even after he left her.—"I will win him yet! He loves me! I always felt it, and now he avows it! He shall not commit the sin of—while he loves another—marrying a girl he does *not* love, and who also loves not him, but some one else!—thus making four people unhappy! No! by the very strength of my soul he shall not do this! I can wait, wait! I do not care how many years of time, or miles of sea and land may sever us! This heart is mine, and I can wait!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE MAIDEN'S FIRST SORROW AND CONSOLATION.

"Now in thy youth beseech of Him
Who giveth upbraiding not,
That His light in thy heart become not dim,
Nor His love be unforgot;
And thy GOD, in the darkest of days, will be
Beauty, and greenness, and strength to thee.'

Bernard Barton.

Though the first violence of Virginia's grief at parting with Joseph had abated, yet her cheerfulness had by no means returned. She missed the intimate associate of her infancy, childhood, and youth every hour. Her very home seemed desolate without him, and all else that remained to her as valueless as the ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness seemed to the shepherd who left them for the sake of the one that was lost. After the departure of Sir Clinton Carey, she seemed somewhat less depressed; she resumed her usual avocations; took her alternate weekly charge of the housekeeping, and always kept a supervision over the house, the garden, the dairy, and the poultry-yard; but her lively interest in all these things had flagged; very wearily she performed these duties. Her bloom had departed with her vivacity. One day her grandfather found her on her return from her favorite bantam chicken-coop—leaning with fatigue or pensiveness against the gate post, her straw hat hanging off behind her head, and the little basket of coarse ground corn hanging heavily from her tired hand. It was such a picture of weariness, sorrow, and self-abandonment, in one so young and artless, that her grandfather looked on her with a moistened eye, as he said, within himself—

"It is not the love-sickness of a sentimental school-girl. It is not love-sickness at all. It is the lonely sister's pining for her cradle-brother. Virginia!" he said, aloud.

"My dear grandfather," she answered, looking up.

"What is the matter, my love?"

"I was thinking of Josey, father, and—I do not feel strong—that is all," she said, drawing her basket upon her arm, putting on her hat, and turning to open the gate.

But the Judge, with that stately suavity of the old-school manner, which ever blended the courtesy of the gentleman with the affection of the relative, intercepted the motion, and taking her little basket, and drawing her arm within his own, led her towards the house.

"Will you pass an hour with me in the library, Virginia?"

"Certainly, dear grandfather."

"Come then," he said, and led her thither. A little bright fire that the fresh spring day required, was blazing on the small hearth. Judge Washington placed Ginnie in the easy-chair, laid away her little hat, and drawing his elbow-chair to her side, said—"Give me your confidence, my child. You have no mother. Speak to me freely, my Ginnie."

Virginia wiped away the tears that began to fall from her eyes, and said—

"I miss Joseph so much, father, that is all. The place does not seem the same without Joseph."

"And *persons* do not seem the same."

"That is so. I feel it is wrong, but I cannot help it—persons do not seem the same to me. Now that Joseph is gone, I do not take comfort in any one that is left behind as I ought. I do not love any one here as I ought. Is it because my heart is desolate?"

"What has become of your faith in the universal efficacy of prayer, my child?"

"I have it yet, father. I *do* pray. If I did not, I should die; for I am not a strong girl, father. My life and gayety was not strength, not energy, not fortitude, father—only vivacity—as different from sound, well-founded, all-enduring cheerfulness of heart—as—as a blaze of stubble-straw is from a bright, lasting fire of solid hickory logs. And the quickness of intelligence, for which I have been overpraised—it is not force of thought—only swiftness of apprehension—as different from strength of intellect, as the fitful flashes of lightning are from the ever-shining stars! No, father, I am a weak girl in mind and body—*very* weak—and I feel it so much, now that Joseph is gone. I feel as though a support were taken from me, and I should fall, and if I did *not* pray, father, I *should*—and perhaps I should die."

"Listen to me, my dear Virginia! I am going to tell you a deep—and *high!—truth*. That feeling of desolation, Virginia!—it comes to all, many times in life, no matter how happy their position may be—and most of all, it comes to earnest souls—it is a visitation from Heaven, Virginia—it is a providence of God—it is intended to call up the soul that neglects its higher life. Yes, Virginia, there are times in the lives of all, even of the most loving, and the most happy—when neither luxury, wealth, fame, nor love; neither mother, nor father, nor brethren, nor sisters, nor wife, nor children can satisfy the soul—when the soul, even in the midst of the truest surrounding affections, feels a complete desolation, which she endures in solitude, in silence, as though it were some guilty secret—until, perhaps, indeed, the affections die in the desert. If that soul, at that stage of its experience, would lift itself fervently, earnestly, perseveringly to God—not by going down upon the knees formally, but by raising the heart!—she would find that the love of God would meet her with a blessing. She would return with strengthened faith, renewed love, refreshed hope, and her friends would be dear to her again, and her possessions valued again. Yes, Ginnie, our dearest affections and best enjoyments require constantly the renovating sunshine and dew of Heaven to keep them alive and blooming through a long life. When the soul is wearied even unto death, with everything in the world, let her go to God for rest and renovation, and she will return with a new gift of life—a new capacity for enjoyment—an almost child-like zest for the blessings of life. Dearest child, I wish I could impress this upon your heart. You think that you do not love me or your friend Magdalene now. It is only because your bosom is filled with sorrowful regret. Pray, my Ginnie, and the regret will be softened, and the love fully restored."

"I *have* done so, father, and have been sustained—I *will* do so—and I believe that I shall be restored."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ADOPTED CHILDREN.

Leave us not leave us not
Say not adieu!
Have we not been to thee
Tender and true?

Too sad our love would be
If thou wert gone!
Turn to us, leave us not,
Thou art our own. *Hemans.*

As time passed, Virginia regained her health and cheerfulness, and became once more zealously interested in her household affairs. About

once a fortnight they received letters from Joseph Carey, every one of which gave evidence of his success in his profession, as well as of his continued regard and undying gratitude. At last, however, came a letter to Judge Washington, marked "private." He took it away to his study, opened and read it. It began by informing him that the writer, though then in the high current of prosperity, determined to abandon his profession, believing himself to be the subject of a Divine mission to carry Christianity and civilization to the heathen—the Light of Life to nations that sat in darkness; it concluded by expressing a hope that his dear friend and patron might approve the mission to which he was so strongly attracted. Judge Washington pondered on this letter sometime before replying to it. He wrote —and—laying before Joseph all the difficulties, hardships, toils, privations, dangers, and discouragements of the missionary's life, and reminding him that many enthusiastic young people mistook that for a Divine call, which was in reality nothing but disappointment, ennui, love of adventure, or some other counterfeit—begged him to stick to his profession for at least twelve months longer before deciding. For the present he said nothing of this to Virginia.

The same mail brought him letters from Sir Clinton Carey, at Washington, informing him that business of the utmost importance called him to England—that he was then on the eve of his journey and voyage—and begging permission to make his adieus to the family by letter only. This the Judge communicated to Virginia and Magdalene.

From this time Magdalene's restless energies began to give her trouble again. And now—as Virginia's health and cheerfulness was fully restored, as there was no hopes of Magdalene's family acknowledging her, as the approach of winter would certainly call the Washingtons to Richmond, where her presence must embarrass them more than ever—Magdalene determined to relieve them of her company, and herself of her insupportable ennui, by going out into the world alone and upon her own responsibility. One morning, therefore, while Virginia was engaged with her domestic duties, Magdalene entered the library of Judge Washington, and—requesting of him the favor of a few moments' conversation—announced her determination. This astonished Judge Washington the more, that she seemed not for a moment to have considered, with a view of being influenced by it, what might be *his* opinion of her proposed course.

"What motive urges you to this, my dear?" he inquired.

She replied by reminding him of the social embarrassment she caused his family. He repudiated that consideration altogether and instantly, and inquired if she had no other motive?

"Yes!" she replied, "the strong necessity of absorbing occupation."

"Is there not a great field of labor *here*, my dear Magdalene? every sort of labor—manual, mental, moral? Truly the harvest even *here* is ripe, but the laborers are few."

"Change, excitement, the pursuit of an object! She needed it! she must have it at any cost!" she said.

"And have you not considered my approbation or disapprobation, my dear child?"

Magdalene told him that she would be deeply pained if he disapproved her plan—that she had not alluded to such a contingency, because, having decided that her purpose was the best for the happiness of all concerned, she had fully determined to carry it out before she had thought of mentioning the subject to any one.

"If your own grandfather, old Adam Hawk, opposes it?"

"It will not turn me aside from my object, dear sir, much as I might regret his opposition."

"You wish, you say, to be independent—to start in life for yourself—how do you propose to do it?"

"First, I shall try to get a situation as governess in some gentleman's family, far from the associations of my childhood, if possible."

"Your position would then be very similar to what it now is—quite as monotonous, without the affection that I hope alleviates all that is painful in your present situation. In a month you would be as weary as you now are."

"Then I should change it, sir."

"And then?"

"Change it again and again, until I found contentment!"

"The Indian blood! the untamed nature! the restless energies! the vagrant disposition!" thought the Judge, and he replied,

"That will never do, Magdalene! You will not find rest to your spirit by any such means—and the encouragement of such a disposition would utterly unfit you for the duties you would assume."

Magdalene felt the truth of this remark, but very much disturbed in mind, she did not reply.

"But, Magdalene, in the event of your failure to secure a situation as governess, what do you propose to do?"

Magdalene's face flushed deeply, and she answered,

"I may try my brush and canvass. You have been so partial as to intimate that I am no bad artist."

"A slow way of making an independent living, however, Magdalene;—and if it should disappoint you?"

"Something else, then, sir," she replied, with a deeper flush, then hastily added—"but I will try the governess first."

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Much more the Judge said to shake her purpose, without producing that effect.

Adam Hawk, when he heard of it, growled a great deal against the course proposed, but without stopping it.

Virginia wept and pleaded in vain.

Finally, Magdalene having, through Judge Washington, advertised for a situation, found one in a far distant Southern State, and prepared for her departure, which was to take place at the same time that the family set out for Richmond.

CHAPTER XVII.

THEODORE AND MAGDALENE.

Imagine something purer far,
More free from stain of clay
Than friendship, love, or passion are,
Yet human still as they;
And if thy lip for love like this,
No mortal word can frame,
Go ask of angels what it is,
And call it by that name. *Moore.*

Theodore Hervey was still at college when the news of Magdalene's expected departure reached him, in a letter from his sister. He lost no time in setting out for home.

One morning—when the Judge was in his study arranging some business with his overseer, previous to leaving home for the Winter, and Virginia was in the upper chambers superintending the folding and packing away of the house-linen in the chests and presses, in which they were to remain until their return in the Spring—Magdalene sat in the parlor, putting the last stitches into a little travelling hood she was quilting for Virginia, when her attention was attracted by the sound of the light wheels of a *solitaire* rolling up the carriage drive. A moment after, the door-bell was rung, and the next instant, much to the surprise of Magdalene, "Mr. Theodore Hervey" was announced, and immediately afterwards entered the room. Magdalene arose and received him with much cordiality, expressing warmly the pleasure she felt in seeing him once more before her departure from the neighborhood. She begged him to be seated, saying that she would immediately send for Virginia and the Judge, who would be rejoiced to see him again before they left—and she was about to ring for a servant, when Theodore, by a gesture, stayed her hand.

"No, if you please, pardon me, I wish to speak with you alone, Magdalene.

Surprised at the unusual earnestness of his tone and manner, Magdalene resumed her seat, and turned to give him her full attention, and in so doing noticed, for the first time, that his naturally dark and picturesque style of beauty was even exaggerated now in the very pale and hollow features, in the large shadowy eyes, and the highly intellectual and spiritual expression of his countenance—and her silent comment was, "He is killing himself by this 'Reading for honors.'"

Theodore remained buried in thought for a few minutes, as though at a loss how to open his business; at length he said,

"And, so you are to leave us soon, Magdalene?"

"Yes, to-morrow."

"Yes. And I have come, Magdalene, to entreat you to delay your journey, perhaps to abandon it finally." He paused. Magdalene looked up to hear more before expressing the quiet wonder she felt. He resumed. "Magdalene, my father, Helen, myself—all know, and appreciate the motive that led you to the formation of this resolution, and I cannot tell you how much it pains us even while we honor you for it. Magdalene, I bring you a letter from my mother, in which, expressing all the affection that herself and our whole family feel for you—she prays you to come and spend the Winter of your friend's absence, at the parsonage," said he, as he handed her the letter.

She received it, and opening, read it to the end. Had Magdalene been of the "melting mood," the kindness of this letter would have opened the fountain of her tears—as it was, she folded it up and put it in her pocket with no show of the strong emotion that really stirred her heart.

"I cannot tell you how grateful I am, dear Theodore," she said.

"And you will make us all happy by coming, dear Magdalene?"

"Impossible, my friend! my engagement is concluded, and my arrangements are all made; besides, Theodore, you are mistaken in me. You have given me credit for a disinterested motive. I had also a selfish one. Theodore, I *must* have change, action, excitement, life!"

Here followed a controversy between Magdalene and Theodore, very similar to those that had occurred between the former and the Judge, and with, of course, a similar result. At the end of this interview, Theodore declining to see Judge Washington or Virginia, left the house. When he was gone, Magdalene told Judge Washington of the kind offer that had been made her, and showed Virginia the letter. The Judge advised and entreated his adopted child to accept Mrs. Hervey's hospitality; and Virginia cast her arms around her neck, and weeping, besought her to go to the parsonage, where they would all know that she was safe, and hear from her continually. But Magdalene shook her head. A

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comet might be turned from its course, as soon as this erratic being. In the afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Hervey, with Helen and Theodore, came by a previous appointment, to spend the last evening with the Washingtons. Mrs. Hervey, warmly seconded by Helen, renewed her invitation—which Magdalene, deeply pained, declined. The afternoon was not half over, when Theodore requested a private interview with Magdalene, and she received him in the library. He came in, drew his chair to the side of Magdalene, took her hand, and in a voice that trembled with excess of emotion, he said—

"Magdalene, I have something to say to you,—and if there be too great abruptness in my speech, you will pardon it for the sake of the strong affection and the urgent necessity that constrains me to speak! Magdalene! I have loved you since you were a child. My affection has grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. I have read your heart with a clearness and precision that no one else, perhaps, has ever done. And while deeply deploring some things that I see there, I love you still, I must love you ever. I know well that it is the first and last, the only one, exclusive love of my whole life. It is a part of my soul. I shall never lose it in time nor in eternity. When I left home for coll ge, it was the parting with *you* only that grieved me. When I returned, it was the meeting with *you* only that rejoiced me. I have—perhaps with culpable egotism and presumption—long habituated myself to consider *you* as the life long companion of my future. When a few days since, I received a letter from my sister, announcing your intended speedy departure, I then felt for the first time *how much* I loved you. I felt, Magdalene, that I should not have the courage to come back to the neighborhood after you were gone—to miss you everywhere. Well, Magdalene, after passing a night full of anxiety—ah, *you* know nothing of such sleepless nights, Magdalene—" He paused. A dark smile was her only comment. He resumed. "I arose in the morning to put in execution a resolution I had formed. I came down here. I arrived late last night. I opened my heart to my parents—and you know what followed, Magdalene. Finally—I am at your side, with their full consent and approbation, to offer you my hand, and such a home as my father's modest house can afford my wife. Will you have me, Magdalene?" He pressed her hand and paused for a reply—looking anxiously, intently into her half averted face, until with sudden self-recollection, he flushed to the brow, and dropped his eyes.

"Theodore, I am profoundly grateful for this proof, a confidence and affection that I pray God, I may ever be able to merit—"

She paused for words to convey her rejection in the most delicate manner. But there was something in her countenance that disturbed him, for he said, anxiously,

"You do not answer me, Magdalene."

She clasped his hand that still held her own, and replied,

"Dear Theodore—dear friend—in return for all this that you offer me, I have only a sister's deep affection, and high respect to give you."

"Magdalene! you do not mean—! Oh, no, my God!" he exclaimed, dropping her hand, and growing very pale. "Speak! say something to me, Magdalene!"

"I say then, dear Theodore, that highly as I estimate the honor you intend me, I am forced to decline it."

"'Honor!' do not mock me, Magdalene! I have nothing to offer you but a true and affectionate heart, and the prospect of a modest competence to be gained by years of industry and economy, and this I have presumed to tender you with startling abruptness. You are proud, and you are somewhat offended, and you mock me. Forgive me, Magdalene, if I have been necessarily too hasty in this. Take time to consider. Only do not leave us yet! Accept my mother' invitation. It was prompted by a true affection for you. *Do*, Magdalene!"

"Dear Theodore, hear me: I am deeply sensible of your mother's and your own goodness to me—profoundly grateful for the proof of confidence and affection *she* gives me—devoutly thankful for the honor *you* do me—the greatest honor you could give me—the greatest honor I could receive from any man, and—" she said, with impressive earnestness, "well, perhaps, it would be for me, could I avail myself of it—but it is impossible—I cannot! I can never have the quiet happiness of being your wife, and loving you as your wife should. I cannot! It is impossible!" she said, in a tone of the very anguish of regret, as though the good and evil of her nature had suddenly risen in battle array against each other, and the good had retreated. But this manner and expression so unusual, so surprising, yet so natural—for she stood then at th very fork of the road of destiny, and felt the crisis of her fate acutely—passed quickly as a spasm, and she was herself again.

"You—you are not engaged, Magdalene?" he asked, in a voice that was momentarily becoming more agitated.

"No, I am not engaged."

"You have no suitor, I think, Magdalene?"

"No," said she, with a painful consciousness of having suppressed a part of the truth.

"Then I will still hope that in time—"

"No, *indeed* you must not think of it!" said she, earnestly—"for if I am not engaged—if I have no suitor—still, it is nevertheless true that you must indulge no fallacious hope—and yet," she

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said, with a sneer at herself, "it is no great good I forbid you to 'hope' for!"

"'No great good,' Magdalene?—the hand of one we love!"

Her heart was stricken with a sudden pain by the thought called up by this question, yet she did not again lose the "natural ruby of her cheek," or the calmness of her manner, as she replied,

"You must forget this, dear Theodore."

"I cannot! It is my nature to remember, and to hope! Ah! Magdalene! my life's star! I will strive, and wait, and hope! I will win thy heart by patience yet!"

The very words she had used in reference to another! Again that sudden, inexplicable pang pierced her spirit, but without betraying itself through those nerves of steel, and muscles of marble, that scarcely anything could disturb, but the presence, the voice, the gaze of ONE.

Finding all his arguments useless for the present, Theodore closed the interview by saying, while he stood before her holding her hand,

"My dearest Magdalene! you go out into a life full of toils, privations, humiliations and perils for one like you! But remember this! in me whom you will not now accept as a husband, you will always, and under all possible circumstances, find a friend and brother. I here pledge you an affection, a devotion and a fidelity that 'neither life, nor death, nor things present, nor things to come,' shall be able to shake. God bless you, Magdalene!"

"And you, Theodore!"

So closed the interview.

After an early tea, the Herveys took leave and departed.

Early the next morning, the family set out in the capacious travelling carriage for Richmond. Virginia was in very high spirits, notwithstanding the prospect of soon parting from her beloved foster sister. The joyful anticipation of meeting Joseph, gave an impetus to her happy temper that nothing could check. They arrived at their house on ——— Street, at Richmond, upon the evening of the second day. Joseph's lodgings were in a distant part of the city, and they had expected to meet him waiting for them at the house. He was not there, however. Judge Washington was obliged to convey Magdalene to the hotel, and place her under the charge of a gentleman and lady who were going South the next morning. He promised Ginnie to go for Joseph, and bring him home with him if possible. Though Magdalene showed no emotion, Virginia wept freely at parting with her. Her tears were soon dried, however, in the excitement of expecting Joseph. Virginia, attended by Coral, went into her room to change her dress, while Polly Pepper, below, arranged the tea-table, against the return of Judge Washington with Mr. Carey. Ginnie came down in a dress of light blue prince's cloth, with her hair in its usual glittering spiral red ringlets.

"Ah, Polly, I am glad you remembered the crumpets Mr. Carey likes so well," she said.

"How could I forget, when you sent me so many messages about them, Miss Ginnie," said she.

Ginnie fidgetted about the table, and walked the floor, or looked out at the windows, until the carriage again rolled up to the door, and Judge Washington, alighting, entered alone.

"Where is Joseph, father?" anxiously exclaimed Virginia.

"My child, he is not at his lodgings. His landlady tells me that he left them this afternoon —she does not know for what destination."

"He—he has not left the city?" asked Virginia, growing pale, and sinking into a chair.

"No, I presume not, my love, we shall probably see or hear from him to-morrow; in the meantime, Ginnie, my dear, order supper," said the Judge, with an effort to conquer or conceal the anxiety that troubled him.

Virginia, trembling, sick to faintness with disappointment and apprehension, complied.

The next morning the postman stopped before the door, and delivered letters for the Judge. Among them was one from Joseph Carey, dated at Richmond the day before, which the Judge opened and read to himself. It ran thus—

Richmond, December 1st, 18—.

MY DEAR AND HONORED FRIEND:—

I have been striving with myself, long, sturdily, but vainly. I dare not remain here, and meet Virginia. The parting with her last Spring, caused me and her so much bitter anguish; the prospect of meeting her soon, of spending the winter in her dear company, agitates me with such a wild ecstacy, that I cannot venture to trust myself to the trial. Bethink you, sir, of the days of your own youth, and consider the tremendous test, to which you would subject me—a test I dare not meet! Enough! You come to Richmond, and bring Virginia to-night! I leave the city to-day! My habits of severe economy have enabled me to save money enough for my present small expenses. I go straight to Boston, to join a Christian Mission, about to sail from that port for India. Let your blessing go with me, my best friend! Convey my endless affection, and my farewell, to Virginia, at the time, and in the words, you may deem most fitting. I dare not write to her! I can scarcely trust myself to write to you! I do not know that I write coherently!—for heart and brain are—not right! But, happy or wretched; present or absent; sane or insane—I am always, and under all circumstances, Judge Washington, most gratefully, affectionately, and faithfully,

Yours, JOSEPH W. CAREY.

"Noble and generous young man! Poor boy! poor boy!" said the Judge, commenting upon this letter. "And now to break this to Virginia!" He paused in thought a long time, holding the open letter behind his back, and

walking slowly up and down the room. At length he touched the bell, and when a servant answered it, he said—"Go and say to Miss Washington that I shall visit her in her chamber, immediately." And soon he followed his messenger up stairs, to Virginia's apartment. He found his grand-daughter industriously working a pair of slippers.

"For Joseph, father," she said, in reply to his look; and laying them down, she wheeled an easy chair near the fire, for him to repose in.

"I have heard from Joseph this morning, Virginia," said the Judge, quietly taking the seat.

"And he! father!—is he well?" exclaimed she, anxiously.

"Yes, my dear, he is well!"

"Thank Heaven!—and yet, father, there is something in your countenance—alarming!—what! what is the matter?"

"Nothing alarming, my love!—Joseph has left the city."

"Left the city," she repeated calmly. Her back was to the window, so that he could not see how pale she had suddenly grown. "Left the city," she reiterated.

"Yes, my dear, left the city," continued the Judge, thoroughly misled by the very quietness of her tone—though that quietness was only the weakness of a fainting heart. "Yes, my dear child! my dear Virginia, your brother has put in execution his long-cherished design of going out to India as a Missionary!—Virginia! My God, Virginia!" he suddenly exclaimed, starting forward to receive her falling form; for, before he had got to the end of his sentence, Virginia had thrown up both hands, taken a step towards him, and now he caught her, fainting, in his arms.

BOOK THIRD AND LAST.

CHAPTER I.

MAGDALENE.

I see the cloud and the tempest near,
The voice of the troubled tide I hear,
Thy bosom's bark on the surge I see,
For wanderer thy loved one is there with thee.

L. Davidson

At the period of which I write, travelling was of course much more tedious and inconvenient than at the present day. Therefore, although Magdalene had set out on her journey near the first of December, it was near Christmas when she arrived at Natchez with her friends, who, leaving her at the only hotel the little town afforded, proceeded on their journey into the interior. Magdalene wrote a letter from her lodgings to Major Lincoln, the cotton planter, for whose only daughter she had been engaged as a private governess.

The next day while waiting in her room, the chamber-maid entered and informed her that a gentleman was in the parlor inquiring for her. Magdalene sent down word that she would attend him immediately, and pausing only long enough to adjust the folds of her dark green habit, and smooth the bands of her rich black hair, she descended into the parlor. As she entered, a gentleman somewhat past middle age, tall, handsome, and of erect military carriage, arose, and advancing to meet her, bowed low, saying,

"Miss Mountjoy, I presume?"

"Yes, sir," said Magdalene, returning his salutation.

"I am Major Lincoln, and am very happy to meet you, Miss Mountjoy!—permit me to offer you a seat," said the Major, handing a chair to our girl—who seated herself in it—and taking one himself. He then entered into conversation with Magdalene, deporting himself throughout the interview with that suave and stately courtesy which distinguished the dignified old school, but which the loose, familiar manners of the present day would stigmatize as "stiff." At the close of their interview, he said,

"As you express yourself quite refreshed, Miss Mountjoy, I will order the horses to the carriage immediately, and we will set out for Boxwood, where my little girl is awaiting her new friend with great impatience." And bowing again, he left the parlor to give the necessary orders, while Magdalene returned to her room to put on her bonnet and furs. She had scarcely completed this arrangement, when a porter appeared to take down her baggage, and the chamber-maid to tell her that Major Lincoln was ready. She went down, and was conducted to the carriage by the Major, with the stately suavity that distinguished his manners.

It was near night when they set out, and after a drive of about two hours on a road between the forest on one side, and the river on the other, they turned into the former, and drove a couple of miles before reaching a plantation, in the centre of which, standing on a slight elevation, stood a very shabby looking country house, of frame work, two stories high, very long in proportion to its height, and surrounded with a piazza to both stories. The lights that were shining through the lower windows, gave an air of cheerfulness to the place. The carriage entered the gate, rolled up towards the house, and stopped before the middle front door. Major Lincoln alighted, handed out Magdalene, and conducted her into the house, and by a door to the right into the parlor, where a bright fire was blazing, a bright lamp burning, a tea-table waiting, and a little girl reading. The little girl made an impulsive bound to meet her father at first, but then with a shy look retreated into her big easy chair. Major Lincoln led Magdalene to a seat,

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and then taking the child's hand, brought her up and said,

"This is my little daughter Lucy, Miss Mountjoy," and stooping over the child, he said, "Lucy, this young lady is your friend and instructress —welcome her!"

The little girl blushed deeply, and bashfully and silently held out her hand. Magdalene took it, drew her up to her knee, stooped and kissed her.

"Now go and order tea, little one!" said the Major, and the child vanished.

The next day after breakfast, Magdalene was introduced to Mrs. Lincoln, the wife of the Major, and the mother of Lucy, a lovely woman, an invalid for many years, who now seldom left her room.

"You will find our house not very comfortable, Miss Mountjoy; and that indeed is the truth of every planter's house in this region of country. The reason is, that they are scarcely homes at all. Between winters spent at New Orleans, or other cities, and summers at the sea-side, we are at home for so short a portion of the year, that it scarcely presents a motive for homestead-improvement. I sometimes wish it might be otherwise. Now in a few days we go to New Orleans for the winter. We return here in April, and remain until June. Then we go North, to the sea-side, and stay until the first of September. We reach home in October, and remain until December, when we go to the city again. So passes our year. During our absence the plantation remains under the sole charge of an overseer, and the house under that of a housekeeper. When the clearing up of the country shall render our summers more healthful, and the interior improvements make the roads in winter more passable, I trust that we shall be enabled to pass more time at home, and be encouraged to improve our houses."

Magdalene found in this amiable family none of the "toils, privations, humiliations and perils," with which she had been threatened by her friends and well-wishers. No more finished "gentleman of the old school" could any where have been found than Major Lincoln, no more amiable lady of—*any* school, than Mrs. Lincoln, no more gentle and endearing child, than Lucy Lincoln; whose delicate health—she inherited her mother's fragility of constitution—induced her parents to keep her at home, and engage a governess to educate her, rather than send her abroad. Soon after Magdalene's arrival, the family went to New Orleans, to spend the remainder of the winter. Though in the midst of one of the gayest cities in the Union, they entered into few of its gayeties. Once or twice, Major Lincoln took Magdalene to the theatre, to which amusement she was passionately devoted. In the spring they returned to Boxwood, where they spent the three most beautiful months in the year for that region of country. Never had Magdalene seen so charming a country as Mississippi, in April, May and June; and she earnestly echoed the phrase of its people—"The Eden of the South."

In June, when the weather began to be very oppressive, they sat out for the North, and about the first of July, arrived at Cape ———, then first becoming the resort of health or pleasure seeking visitors. It was, as yet, early in the season, and the place was comparatively vacant of company. Our party enjoyed themselves the more upon this account, for Mrs. Lincoln was too delicate, Lucy too young, and Magdalene's social position too undefined to make it agreeable to mix much in society. As the season advanced, however, the place became crowded with company. Morning and evening they rode or drove back into the country, or walked by the sea-side. They had been there more than six weeks, and Magdalene was beginning to feel the motions of those restless energies, that latent Indian nature which forbade her to be quiet any where for any length of time, when one evening she set out for a solitary ramble on the beach. Up and down she wandered, until twilight was darkening into night, her morose, half savage mood, soothed by the monotonous, deep, low thunder of the great ocean on the coast. Up and down she wandered unmindful of the gathering darkness, or the comments that might be made upon her long absence at that late hour, thinking of *one*. Not with regret, not with doubt, not with anxiety, but with a deep and intense prophetic conviction of happiness mystically blended with darkest doom. Up and down she wandered, until a deep toned voice, at her side, said,

"*Magdalene.*"

She did not start or exclaim, though her very heart stood still, as Sir Clinton Carey paused at her side and raised her hand to his lips. He led her a few steps onward to a pile of rocks, seated her thereon and stood before her. She had not spoken yet.

"You are surprised to see me here, Magdalene?"

"Yes."

"And—glad!"

"Oh, yes! yes!"

He sat down by her side, drew her to his bosom, and pressed his lips to hers.

"You think this meeting a 'singular coincidence,' Magdalene?"

"No, I do not think so! I think that you knew I was here and sought me."

"You are right, but how knew I that you were here, my Magdalene?"

"I do not know, certainly; I think possibly that you have never lost sight of me yet."

"You are right again, Magdalene—a frequent

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and regular correspondence with Judge Washington has kept me advised of the external circumstances of your life, and in them, Magdalene, I have read that which others have not dreamed,'' and again he drew her within his arms and rested her burning face upon his bosom. "Now for my secret, Magdalene. You have been with me everywhere; in the city, in the ship; in the calm, and in the storm; on the sea, and in port; in the babel of great London, and in the solitude of my remote native hills;—you have haunted me. Never has your form and face been absent from my side; never has your voice ceased to make strange, sweet music in my ears; never have your darkly veiled bright eyes withdrawn their glances from mine! Never—night or day—sleeping nor waking, have you left me! Magdalene! *why* have you pursued, chained and brought me back? Do not defend yourself! Do not tell me that you were far distant in Mississippi, while I was on the sea or in England! That you never wrote to me—never spoke of me. You *thought* of me. You *dreamed* of me! You *loved* me! You *wanted* me! You followed me in the mighty strength of your spirit! You have recaptured the fugitive, and he is at your feet! Do with him as you please, Magdalene! It is such a worn out phrase to say 'I love you!' that I want you more than all else the world or heaven can offer me—that I prize you more than life! Oh, this has been said by millions of men to women, not one of whom ever felt a tithe of the power that has vanquished me! Magdalene! speak to me."

But she could not have spoken, with all her self-command she could not have spoken, had her soul depended on it!

"Magdalene! my destiny! answer me!"

She put both hands in his, and dropped her head upon his shoulder.

"Magdalene!" he whispered, between many soft caresses, "Magdalene, I have somewhat to say to thee—but—not now!" he added, after a moment's thought.

The loud ringing of the last supper bell aroused both from their forgetfulness, and they arose simultaneously to return to the house, when Sir Clinton, laying his hand upon Magdalene's, said,

"Magdalene! my love! listen to me! And in spite of all the strangeness of what I am about to say to you—believe in me—will you, can you, Magdalene?"

"As in heaven! Yes!"

"Then, this is what I have to say to you! You must not recognise me in this place at all! Do you understand me, Magdalene?"

"I understand your words, but not the reason for them."

"You shall know the reason soon, Magdalene! and, for the present, you will oblige me in this?"

"Assuredly."

"And you will not suspect me?"

"When I *do*, Sir Clinton, I will renounce you," said she, as she bowed and walked towards the house, leaving him alone upon the sands. She entered the house and seated herself at the supper table oppressed with a sense of wrong, degradation and danger.

And yet Magdalene could not be angry with him—proud as she really was, humiliating as his manner towards her at times certainly was, she could not be angry with him. She wondered at herself for this! She wondered if anything on earth that he could say or do, could raise a single vindictive feeling in her heart. It was because she loved and trusted him through all things and beyond all things. Aye! Sir Clinton Carey, bring her high spirit low! trample her pride in the dust! set your heel upon her neck! She has no pride for you! She will bear it all; and when you tell her that you love her, she will believe your word against a thousand facts. Yes! but *once* outrage and utterly betray her love! and you had better alone and unarmed, have met a lioness in her forest walk, than Magdalene in her roused wrath!

The next morning early, Magdalene was walking on the beach, when Sir Clinton Carey again joined her. He invited her to sit upon the rocks, and placing himself beside her, took her hand—

"My dearest Magdalene, I told you—did I not? that I had somewhat to say to you."

"Yes."

"Listen then, Magdalene. You heard me say upon the morning that I left you at Prospect Hall, that I was poor, *very* poor, did you not?"

"Yes," said Magdalene, in a low voice, for a vague pain seized her heart.

"Hear me farther upon this subject, my child, my dear child!" he said, drawing her to his heart. "Like the unjust Steward of the New Testament, I cannot work—to beg I am ashamed; I am poor still, Magdalene; and the only prospect of better fortune, is a wealthy marriage, or the continued favor of an aged and rich relative, whose heir I am, but whose favor and fortune I should alike lose by contracting what *he* would consider an ill-advised matrimonial engagement—are you listening to me, my dear?"

"Yes, yes," said Magdalene, in a dying voice. He drew her hand up over his shoulder, and stooping, looking tenderly in her eyes—whispered a lulling, soothing voice,

"Will you go to England with me? Will you trust me with your happiness, your honor?"

Magdalene snatched her hand away as though a serpent had stung it! flushed crimson, turned deadly pale, arose and staggered from him—and would have fallen, but that he was at her side again in a moment, and leading her back seated

her upon the rock, and dropping upon one knee took her hand, and while his face was flushed, said, in a voice faltering with strangulation—"Magdalene! you have misapprehended me! most cruelly misapprehended me! For what in the name of God do you take me, Magdalene? Magdalene! say that you trust me! Say that you will consent to a secret marriage, and go with me to England! *Talk*, Magdalene!" His energy of manner—her own passions, or *both*, mastered her; recovering herself, she said,

"Sir Clinton! speak to me always plainly, I beseech you. *I* speak *very* plainly. And my words never admit of two constructions—pardon me! I do not understand my own emotions, my own utter loss of self-government—almost utter loss, not quite—for now, even now, in this moment of great agitation, I will not give you a reply; I am disturbed, I must get quiet—I am heated, I must get cool—I am mad indeed! and I must get sane! Leave me—or suffer me to go!"

"Foolish and tormenting girl! For what reason do you wish time to consider of this; you have no parents to disobey or forsake; no relatives to grieve!"

"I have a storm in my own soul to still, though!"

And she arose and walked towards the house. Not until the next morning did she lay her hand within that of Sir Clinton Carey, and say,

"I will go with you."

Their arrangements were quickly and quietly completed. Magdalene signified her wish to quit her present situation at the end of the ensuing term, which would bring also the end of the season at Cape ——. The company were leaving daily, for the last week in August had come, and upon the first of September Magdalene bade farewell to her friends, and set out for Norfolk under the escort of a gentleman and lady who were travelling thither, and who in their turn placed her for the remainder of her journey in the care of a fellow passenger, whom they had known at the Cape, who was no other than Sir Clinton Carey. It was at a small village some few miles out of Norfolk, that Sir Clinton Carey and Magdalene Mountjoy pledged to each other those vows that nothing but death could annul. The only witnesses of this marriage were the confidential servant of Sir Clinton, and a young girl recently engaged as a travelling maid for Magdalene. Immediately after the ceremony they returned to Norfolk, from whence they sailed the next morning for England.

One thing only troubled Magdalene on her voyage out. It was this. During the many months of her connection with the Lincolns, she had written many letters to Virginia; to none of which had she received any reply. At length she had written to Judge Washington, and had received a letter, long after its date—for it had followed her around the country—in which she learned that Virginia had been very ill—was very slowly recovering, and was then residing at the Sunny Isle. Again, before leaving the Lincolns, Magdalene, anxious for later intelligence, had written to the Judge—but though she had waited long for his answer, it had not arrived up to the day of her sailing—and now she felt that there rolled between them an ocean of fate wider than the Atlantic.

CHAPTER II.

NEW LIFE.

A new life, like a young sunrise, breaks
On the strange unrest of thy night.

Browning.

Magdalene's happiness was not long qualified by regret for those she loved, yet had left! She knew precisely how it was, and how it would be, with her friends in their thoughts, feelings and actions towards herself. She knew that Judge Washington and Virginia would write to her again and again, and that their letters would remain unanswered. She knew that, alarmed at her continued silence, they would write to Major or Mrs. Linloln, and that then an eclaircissement would occur, filling both parties with astonishment, grief and dismay; that Major Lincoln, surprised to hear that she had not returned to the protection of her friends, would write and tell Judge Washington when, where, and—as far as he knew—under what circumstances Magdalene had left his family; that Judge Washington, grieved and alarmed, would instantly set on foot an inquiry to find the clue to her fate—which owing to the strict precautions taken, would fail; that, finally, their sorrow and anxiety would yield to time, or to the conviction that its object was dead, or, what was worse, utterly lost, and unworthy to live. But, until then, how much, from suspense, they must suffer! How much, from sympathy with them, must she herself suffer!—But, in respect to the extent and duration of her own trouble, Magdalene was mistaken. Soon she felt that all regret, remorse and grief—every emotion and thought—was swallowed up in one infinite contentment. The old, scornful maxim that "Marriage is the bane of love," was utterly refuted in the case of Magdalene and of Clinton. Every day, as they knew each other more, they loved each other better, and were happier in their mutual love. Their happiness seemed a constantly increasing good. How Clinton was changed since their marriage! Had he been egotistical, arrogant and capricious before? No lover could be more disinterested, de-

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voted and constant than he was *now*. There was something almost deprecating in his service of her. And as for Magdalene, her heart ached with the fullness of her gratitude, love and joy, and this excess of life took a strange turn.

It was September, and the voyage out was, in almost every respect, delightful. When out of sight of land, the vast panorama of the unbounded waters aroused all the power—and the sublime splendor of the rising and setting sun at sea, kindled all the fire—of Magdalene's strong and ardent enthusiasm; and this stimulated passion for the sublime and terrific, excited a desire to be in the midst of a great storm at sea! She felt that her own strong, energetic and half-savage spirit would revel alike amid the wild warfare of winds and waves, and amid the powerful emotions of terror, grief and despair they would excite in men. And so, in a moment of gay confidence, she told Sir Clinton, with a kindling cheek and a flashing eye. He enjoyed to the quick, the freshness of *her* joy, laughed almost aloud, and, caressing her, exclaimed.

"Oh, Magdalene, with what newness of life you inspire me! How I shall delight to go over the Continent with you! To see those fine eyes of yours soar up to the top of Mount Blanc! and blaze in the light of the glaciers! To see those cheeks and lips of yours glow under the refulgent skies of Italy! and that earnest, fervent soul of yours fall into one of its profound and beautiful reveries amid the ruins of the old world's grandeur! Oh, Magdalene! to take a beautiful, intellectual and ardent country girl to see the wonders of the old world! What a new sense of existence is in that!"

But in the matter of the desired storm at sea, Magdalene's destructive sublimity of mood was not destined to be gratified at so costly a price. The voyagers were favored with a fast-sailing vessel, fine weather and fair winds, and they made the trip in something less than a month.

It is not my intention to record minutely the life of Magdalene and of Clinton for the next few months. They landed at Liverpool, but without going into England, immediately took passage across the channel, to set out upon their Continental tour. They passed the remaining autumn months of October and November, in Germany and Switzerland. And her awe and enthusiasm among the stupendous Alpine precipices, and her admiration of the sublime and beautiful scenery and gray old ruins on the Rhine, came up to his highest expectations, and refreshed and renewed him like a bath in the fountain of youth. Early in December they journeyed Southward, towards Italy, and here her deep interest in the magnificent records of the ancient world brought back—*conjured* back—the days of his own first ardent enthusiasm, and he never wearied of making a ruin, a relic, a picture, or a statue the theme of history, tradition or poetry, to give it a deeper interest in her heart. And Magdalene felt how kind beyond a lover's or a husband's kindness was this perfect sympathy, this never-wearying devotion, and she felt that her whole soul's gratitude and love, great as it was, was insufficient for his merits.

They went to Sicily, and here, under sunny skies and amid luxuriant landscapes, in a palazzo where all that wealth, taste and love of luxury could create, were combined in a terrestrial paradise, they passed the winter. And here, in this luxurious retirement, Magdalene discovered every day new and surprising beauties and attractions in a heart and mind seldom equalled for depth and strength of passion, force and originality of thought, and for power and splendor of expression. Every day she admired and loved him more, until her love and admiration verged upon adoration, worship, idolatry! and the longer she contemplated her image of clay, the brighter, diviner it became in her eyes. She thought with a secret joy—how opposite *her* case was to that of most other women, who saw at first *only* what was *best*, and *often* what was *false* in their lovers, and had nothing left but faults to discover, and illusions to mourn. *She* had seen his faults at first, and loved him in despite of them—and now those faults had seemed to pass away, leaving his character all bright and clear, while new excellences were revealing themselves continually. She never questioned the reality of this change—never inquired whether he were not, at heart, the same—whether it were not the difference in her position that made the difference in his deportment—whether he did not consider the difference in station between Sir Clinton Carey's wife and the overseer's grandchild quite wide enough to warrant any distinction in manner. She never questioned or cavilled at anything he said or did now. She was too happy to speculate upon her happiness. This was, altogether, the most delightful winter she had ever spent in the whole course of her life.

Early in the Spring they left their Sicilian "Garden of Eden," with much regret on Magdalene's side. They went to Paris, where Magdalene soon found herself the centre of a brilliant circle of poets, wits, and philosophers, of both sexes, whose attractive charm of manner, brilliancy of conversation, startling originality of thought, and daring speculations, would have fascinated and carried away a mind less stern and inflexible than was that of our "Indian girl," in all cases where her heart was not concerned. Often after some evening spent in such a circle —when her intellect had been aroused and excited at the same time that all her preconceived opinions, and all her cherished early ideas had been startled from their propriety, and she had staggered under the shock of some powerful new

impression,—she would seek Clinton, and in the sanctuary of confidence, speak of these subjects, and he, with a smile, half paternal, half lover-like, would caress her, and express himself glad that she was not "frightened;"—for so he would continue to interpret the unchanging cheek, unfaltering voice, and perfect quietude of manner with which she would speak, and which was owing, not to deficiency of moral emotion, but to a superabundance of physical strength. Magdalene *was* "frightened,"—but by the only phantom, real or imaginary, that could possibly frighten her—namely, the doubt, the fear of her future happiness with him; and so, in her perfect candor she told him one night. She remembered that night all her life long. They were sitting on a sofa in her chamber. He put his arm around her neck, and drew her head down upon his bosom, and gazed long and deeply,—as though he would have read her soul—as though he would have sent his piercing glance deep into the profound abysses of her spirit—the *terra incognita* of even her own self-knowledge—and searched for her yet unknown and undeveloped character, and prophesied of her future! *His* eyes expressed in turn—sorrow, pity, TERROR!—as he gazed with dilating pupils, and slowly withdrew them, exclaiming, in a deep voice—

"My God, Magdalene!—if I have been mistaken in you all this time! If, in willing you the greatest good, I have done you the greatest harm!" and he put her from his bosom, and walked about awhile, in great trouble.

That was the first painful impression Magdalene had ever received from him—and I had nearly said, the *last*. From that time he became, if possible, still more devoted to her happiness. Everything that the most solicitous affection could inspire was done for her. Before their marriage, he had said that he was "poor, *very* poor," yet now there seemed no want of money, or sparing of expense, everything that imagination could suggest and wealth purchase was procured for her. To Magdalene there was something almost painful in this excess of solicitude. It made her feel as if she were foredoomed to some unhappy fate. It so resembled the self-sacrificing devotion we give to the dying, or those soon to die. And Magdalene felt that neither for declining health, or ensuing calamity, did she need so much care.

It was September again—just one year from the anniversary of their marriage, when one day Sir Clinton Carey came into the room where she was awaiting him, and laying a packet of letters on the table, sat down and called her to him. She came and sat upon his knee, with one arm around his neck, while he opened the packet—but then, as by a second thought, he said—

"You will not care to hear the letter read, Magdalene!—the *news* is, that my relative, Lord Cliffe, is in extremity, and his lawyer, who is also mine, has written for me to come instantly to London!"

"And you go to-morrow!—perhaps to-day?" questioned Magdalene.

"Not so, my dear. I must see you comfortably provided for, first—for of course you know, my dear Magdalene, that under all the circumstances, I cannot take you to England now."

"I suppose not," admitted Magdalene, with a sigh, and an enforced smile—"but, dearest, never mind my comfort. You care too much for my comfort—too little for your own, and for other people's interest. Go at once. Leave Paris to-morrow—*to-night!*—because a day's procrastination may close the opportunity of your ever seeing your aged relative again, and the wishes of the dying should be commands. Go, *to-night*, or you may never see *him* again! *Me* you can afterward see. *I* am young, and have indestructible health, and shall live to please or to plague you half a century or more yet. Come! I release you! Go at once, and send for me as soon as you can."

He bent his head over her, and shuddered as he strained her to his bosom, and his voice faltered, as he said—

"No, Magdalene! I cannot leave you in this place. I shall not leave Paris for several days yet!"

Nor could she persuade him to do so—nor did she much regret his inflexibility upon this point.

We often think it our duty to urge a person to a certain course of conduct, which, nevertheless, we cannot help hoping they will not pursue.

All the next day Sir Clinton Carey was engaged in business. On the morning of the third day he came into Magdalene's boudoir, and invited her to take a drive. She was soon ready, and he drew her arm within his own, conducted her down stairs, and placed her in the carriage that was waiting before the door, stepped in after her, seated himself by her side, and gave the direction to the coachman. They were driven through the city, and out some distance into the country—until the carriage was drawn up before the gate of a small, but elegant villa, of white marble, upon the banks of the Seine. The driver alighted, opened the door, and let down the steps. Sir Clinton Carey stepped out and handed out Magdalene, who looked inquiringly in his face, drew her arm within his own, and led her into the house.

"Are you fatigued, Magdalene?" he inquired, gently, as they entered the house.

She looked up with a queer smile—"When was I *ever*, Clinton?"

"Then I will take you at once over the house, and I want you to criticise its appointments. It belongs to a dear friend of mine, for whose residence I have fitted it up. Come!" and taking

her hand, he conducted her through the suits of splendidly furnished rooms. "Now, Magdalene, what is still wanted to perfect this," said he, as they sat down together on a sofa in a beautiful boudoir."

"But one thing!"

"What? It shall be procured if the earth possesses it!"

"Do not make rash promises. This home wants, to perfect it, a master and a mistress who love each other as we do. Is your friend married?"

"Are *you* married, Magdalene? For this house is *yours*."

Magdalene was perplexed as well as gratified, by this announcement. She wondered that Sir Clinton should purchase a villa just as they were upon the point of leaving France, and with her usual frankness, she expressed this.

"It may be many months before the settlement of my business in England enables me to send for you, Magdalene! In the meantime, I wish you to be perfectly comfortable here. This villa is a very desirable piece of property, and a very delightful place of residence. It is within an easy drive of the Tuilleries, and if we come to Paris another year, it will be pleasant to have this home."

"And I am the friend for whom you furnished it," said Magdalene.

"Yes—I would not tell you at first, dearest, because I knew that in that case you would not name any defect that you might see—I thought possibly you might, if you were left to suppose that the house was furnished for another. I am rejoiced that you like it, dear, for you *do*—do you not?" he inquired, caressingly.

"Clinton, you overwhelm me with kindness. You put me down and silence me. I have absolutely nothing to say that would not be disgracefully inadequate to express my feeling of your goodness."

"Yes, I am good in some things, and God knows, my dear, I hope and trust that you may continue to think so! I have willed your largest life and greatest happiness, Magdalene. I have studied and labored for it day and night, with a burning heart and throbbing brain! even when I seemed not to see you, Magdalene! I have schemed and plotted for your good, more than ever courtier did for court favor! And this was the more intricate, difficult, and heart and brain racking, because I wished to achieve your own good without causing ill, even by a moment's pain, to any other! I loved you, Magdalene, so much! I knew you loved me! And sometimes when wisdom dictated a thaw of coldness that I never felt, Magdalene!—sometimes I would catch your eyes and pour through mine the whole meaning of my soul!"

"And I read you aright!"

"Ah!" said Clinton, with someting of a bitter sneer at himself.

"Yes, I did! I never suspected that you scorned ME. How could I suppose *that*?"

"I *never* did, Magdalene!"

"I knew from the first evening that we met, you loved me!"

"I *did*, Magdalene! and from that hour one idea possessed and governed me! your happiness! Yet—great God! if I have failed!"

"It will be my own fault!"

"It will, Magdalene! Yet not the less my own terrible misfortune!"

"You feel and speak too morbidly about this, my dearest friend! I am very happy, only I reproach myself that I do not feel the same great concern for your future, that you feel for mine."

"And yet, Magdalene, there is something in your eye—something on your brow that is not happiness! You are the soul of truth and candor. What is it? Tell me!"

"I will! it is because everything that is not plain, simple, square, well-defined, unmistakable, *pains* me. Words and sentences that do not express the *full* truth, or that express *more* than the truth, or that admit of more than *one* construction, *pain* me—pain me always—pain me deeply in one that I love. You deal in such phrases, dear Clinton, and they give me trouble. It seems ungrateful in me to *feel* so, but I cannot avoid it! It seems insolent in me to *say* so, but you asked me for my thought, and I have no concealments from you! and you are so forbearing, so patient—that I have no fear of offending you! I loathe myself for feeling and for saying this! Visit it in any way you please, Clinton! I will submit!

"Alas! Magdalene!" he began, and there he stopped. Soon he embraced her and said, "Let us talk of something else!"

"Yes! of your trip to England, of the career that opens before you! You succeed to the title and estates of Lord Cliffe! That is *valuable*, but *most* valuable as a step into a more useful sphere of action. You will be in the House of Lords! Oh, Clinton! how anxious I have been to see you in public life! how impatient I have been to see you wasting your manhood's years, and your splendid talents in idleness and self-indulgence! Oh, Clinton! I have had great ambition! high ambition! powerful ambition for myself! Now, all my ambition is merged in aspiration after *your* success! Oh! I shall feel so glorified in *your* glory! so great in *your* greatness! so royal in *your* royalty! for, Clinton, you will be great! you will be glorious! and if you have not the sovereign's name, you will have the sovereign's might! You will be that 'power behind the throne greater than the throne itself!' You will rule the nations of the earth by force of mind! Clinton! you know that I am no

excitable enthusiast! I *have* enthusiasm, but it is profound, and only moves on great occasions, and it moves powerfully! I would it were a force to impel even *you* on to a career of greatness! Clinton, I would have men point you out and say, 'that is the first man in Europe! the greatest statesman in the world!' and I would have all that power converted into blessing for humanity! I would sanctify a human ambition by a Divine beneficence!" Her head was raised, her cheeks were glowing, her crimson lips apart, her eyes sparkling as she spoke; *suddenly!* as by magic, all was changed in her. She started violently, shuddered terribly. Her high glance fell, her cheek paled, her lips grew ashey, and she was falling, when he caught her—exclaiming—

"My God! Magdalene! are you ill?"

"No—hush! Nothing! I am better!" she said, incoherently.

"What is the matter? you tremble yet!"

"It is nothing! really nothing!"

"What is or *was* the 'nothing' then, that caused your sudden indisposition? Come, Magdalene! you have no concealments!"

"It—it was—*a dream!*"

"'A dream!'"

"Or rather, *the sudden realization of a scene in a dream!*"

"Magdalene! such absurdity, my dear!"

"Do not speak of it! Forget it, pray!"

"I have never seen you so terribly shaken!"

"Forget it, I beseech you!"

"'Shadows this night have struck more terror to the heart of Richard, than could the substance of ten thousand men.' Will you not tell me this remembered dream, Magdalene?"

"Not now! not now! Oh! I beseech you! speak no more of it!" said she. And Sir Clinton, astonished at this unparalleled weakness and continued agitation, became silent.

"Let us go hence!" said Magdalene, as soon as she had, in some degree, recovered her self-command.

And they left the villa, re-entered the carriage, and drove back to Paris.

That night, as they talked together of Clinton's speedy departure, and of Magdalene's longer residence in France, Clinton said,

"In the exigencies of your daily life, Magdalene, you will need some intimate friend. I would like to leave you in the care of such an one. In and among the many men whom I have presented to you, is there any single individual for whom you feel a greater degree of friendship or in whom you place a deeper confidence than in all the others? Tell me, Magdalene."

She thought for a few moments, and then replied—

"No, there is not! There are several I admire—some I esteem—one or two I highly respect! but no one individual in whom I feel any especial interest!"

"I am sorry, Magdalene! I would like to leave you in the care of some one, and would prefer to be guided by your preferences."

"I can take care of myself, dear Clinton."

"Yes, dear, among the forests, fields and floods of the Chesapeake, better than upon the banks of the Seine! I cannot leave you unprotected, Magdalene!"

"What do you think will happen to me?—Well!—if it will ease your own mind at all, you may give Monsieur De Ville a charge over me!"

"That hideous old satyr—"

"That biting old satir*ist*, you mean. Yes! I like him! I like his 'mirthfulness and destructiveness,' as my Virginian familiar demon, Bruin, would understand it! his bitter irony, as we call it!"

"Oh, Magdalene! you have a taste for monsters! Well, be it so—he is sincere, brave and frank!"

"That is what I like in him! He would not be sincere and frank, without being brave, or brave without being sincere and frank!"

The next morning, Sir Clinton Carey removed Magdalene to the Villa on the Seine, and spent the last night of his stay in France there with her. At day-break the next morning, the carriage was in readiness before the door to convey him to Paris, whence he was to set out on his return to England. Of course the parting even for a few months between those who loved each other so devotedly and so exclusively, was very painful. Magdalene possessed, or at least exhibited more fortitude, than did Clinton. They parted at the door of the carriage, and again and again Clinton stepped out, and folding her to his bosom, exclaimed,

"Oh! Magdalene! We do not know what may turn up in this world! We cannot prophecy what a day may bring forth! But, oh! Magdalene! what ever happens, believe that I love you! For as the Lord lives, I *do*, Magdalene! I *do!*" he reiterated, pressing her to his heart. "Think of me as well as you can, Magdalene! Good-by!"

"God bless you, Clinton," said she, fervently.

"Good-by! Good-by!" he exclaimed, almost wildly straining her to his bosom an instant, then leaping into the carriage, which was soon whirled out of sight. Magdalene returned to the Villa, pained most deeply at the thought of his pain at parting with her, yet gratified at that proof of his affection for her.

His words and manners of late had been perplexing. There had been a latent meaning in them that would have seriously disturbed her peace, but that she conscientiously and perseveringly banished everything from her mind that

tended to create a doubt or a suspicion of him.

That day her little old "guardian" came down to bring her the news of Clinton's departure from Paris, and to receive her "commands" for any service in his power to perform. Magdalene thanked him, and promised to let him know when she required "aid and comfort."

Magdalene soon began to feel her loneliness in this strange country. This was not the immediate effect of her solitude, but day by day, she felt it more and more.

She would have fallen into gloom, but that with one of her strong volitions of the will, she wrested her thoughts from herself and her own situation, and fixed them upon a work she had long had in view, namely: a new tragedy of Joan D'Arc, which she wished to compose in French blank verse, and offer to the principal theatre in Paris. This was an exciting and absorbing labor, and once interested in its progress, Magdalene worked on from day to day—passing into the being of her own creation, and losing all sense of her real in her ideal existence; and so the first weeks of Clinton's absence slipped away, and her drama was completed to her own satisfaction, before she paused to wonder why Clinton did not write.

"He is busy, absorbed—as I have been. Doubtless I shall hear soon! Or if I do not get a letter, he will step in upon me himself some day soon! Instead of writing, he will come!"

She submitted her drama first to M. De Ville, feeling sure that if it passed his biting, acrimonious criticism, it would have gone through the sharpest, severest ordeal to which any such production could have been subjected. The old man took it home, with many a carping sarcasm, that boded no good fortune to the author.

That night Magdalene wrote to Clinton—not to complain of his silence—not to express anxiety, for she indulged no weakness of the sort—but to tell him of her occupations and her hopes, and to ask him if he were not coming soon, at least to write to her. And this letter she determined to send in by M. De Ville, when he should come out the next day. The old man presented himself about sunset. Magdalene could guess nothing from his shut up countenance, but not being a person to endure a moment's *unnecessary* suspense, she at once broached the subject of her thoughts, by saying,

"Perhaps you have had time to look through my drama, Monsieur."

"Perhaps I have not, Madame! Perhaps that drama defrauded me of my whole day's business yesterday. Perchance I carried it to Madame De B———'s *soiree*, and read it to her circle. Perchance there was some sensation—some excitement—and the name of the author was called for by acclamation! I would not give it up, and the result of my persistence in silence you may easily conjecture!"

"They fixed the disowned child upon you!"

"Exactly. How I blushed! No maiden crimsoner! But how much more painfully I blushed when they found out the author, and their mistake! Well, Madame! as expedition in these matters is of primary importance, I took advantage of the fresh enthusiasm of this circle, and begged the interest and recommendation of M. D———, and E———, and Mad. M———, with Leviere, the manager of the ——— Theatre, to have it brought out. M. D——— called on Leviere this morning. In short then, Leviere looked over the drama, sent it to Madame Henriette, and finally, this afternoon, I received a note from Leviere, informing me that the tragedy was accepted, and would probably be produced in a few weeks—I came straight to you with the news!"

"A thousand thanks!—but—"

"Well, Madame! You were about to ask—"

"Have you received no letters from England?"

"Ah! bah! I tell you a piece of news that should overjoy you, and you captiously ask me for letters from England! Will you still think of that fellow?"

"I will trespass on your kindness so far as to ask you to take charge of a letter to Paris, and mail it for England, if you will so far oblige me."

With something between a groan and a sneer, the old man received the letter, and depositing it in his pocket, took his leave.

Having thus despatched her letter, Magdalene experienced no farther uneasiness on that score. She felt sure that it would soon bring a reply from Clinton.

Having finished her work, she had no other occupation to keep her at home. She went to Paris, and to the literary soirees of Madame De B——— often.

The next few weeks, during which the new dresses and new scenery were being got up for her drama, and the rehearsals already being commenced, were full of interest and excitement for her. The daily rehearsals of the new drama were attended by the *elite* of the literary circles of Paris, and already the approaching sound of a coming triumph reached her ears.

The "eventful" night at last arrived when the tragedy was to be performed. The tickets had been all sold early in the day.

The house was crowded at an early hour of the evening. Magdalene, attended by "her monstor," "her familiar," "her demon," as Monsieur De Ville was called, occupied a private box closely curtained.

The night was one of unalloyed triumph.

The first scene was welcomed cordially. The

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interest of the audience was strongly aroused in its progress, and the excitement increased to the close of the first act, when the curtain fell amid such a storm of applause as only a French audience can raise around a favorite actress in a highly successful drama.

"*Ciel!* What do you think of *that*, Madame?" asked her "demon," in a tone of sympathetic triumph.

"That the public is in a good humor to-night!"

"And the *dramatist*, too! *n' est ce pas?*"

"I do not know. Mlle. Henriette does not satisfy me! She is a pretty woman, a graceful woman, and a talented woman, but she has not force of character enough to conceive Joan D'Arc!"

"*You* could play it better?" asked the "familiar," with a queer blending of truth and sarcasm in his dry tone.

"Yes," answered Magdalene, quietly — "I could do it better!"

The triumph of the evening arose higher with every act of the play, and at its close the curtain finally dropped amid a tempest of enthusiastic excitement, such as has seldom been seen even in a French theatre.

"*Now then, pardieu!* what do you think of *that?*" crowed M. De Ville, as he threw Magdalene's shawl over her shoulders, when they were about to leave the box. "Have you ever, in all your life, experienced a greater triumph, a keener joy?"

"Yes, several times in my life! Last month I experienced a greater triumph, a keener joy when I had completed the drama to *my own* satisfaction, without which it might still have succeeded, but the success only would have bitterly mocked *my own* sense of failure!"

"You knew it *ought* to succeed! You did not know it *would!* Now you know it *has!* Are you not happy? Are you not triumphant?"

Magdalene was *not*—at least not triumphant! She was profoundly grateful—profoundly happy—but there was a voice in her heart that asked—"Who maketh *thee* to differ from another?" "Verily I say unto you of them to whom much is given, much will be required." The gratitude she felt in the power freely bestowed upon her, the pleasure she took in its exercise, the joy she felt in its triumph, all impressed her with a strong feeling of obligation to God, and inspired her with a desire to sanctify by great usefulness a gift so full of happiness.

Early the next morning, little Monsieur De Ville rode out to the Maisonette-sur-Seine.

"Well, Madame La Leonne, how breaks the morning on last night's fever?" Magdalene smiled gravely. "All Paris is ringing with that triumph! The drama will run a hundred nights I have no doubt! Well! what do you say? 'Nothing'—*Bas! Vil! Infame!* There is nothing in life that transcends the self-appreciation of a successful young *debutante!*"

"Except the self-conceit of an old stager!" Magdalene could not help retorting.

"Ah! Well! I have budgets of news besides! a mail from England with letters for you! Ha! does *that* move your serene highness? Here they are then!" said the little "monster," putting a package in her hand. A glance showed her that several of the papers were legal documents, and one only a letter!

A letter from Clinton!

She tore open the seal—she never realized until that instant, how, through all occupations and emotions, she had waited, watched, and hoped for *that letter!*—how, under every superficial interest, had smouldered that intense fire of *expectation!* Forgetting, utterly, the presence of another—with crimson cheeks and lips glowing in breathless eagerness, and eyes consuming the page, she began to read.

What was there in that letter that suddenly struck all color from her face, and all power from her frame?

De Ville—forgotten—looked at her in astonishment.

She read on, with face as white, as motionless as marble. She might have seemed a statue, but, for the slow, steady motion of the stony eyes that followed the lines. At length, the hand that held the letter fell, like lead by her side, and she sat with death-like brow, and white lips struck apart, and straining eyes fixed on vacancy!

Long she sat so—perfectly silent—and the old man dared not speak to her.

At last, she arose—the letter dropped from her hand—and with the same pallid brow and stony gaze—with one hand raised as in perplexity to her head, and the other extended dubiously before her—as one suddenly stricken with blindness, or with frenzy—as a sleep walker, or, a phantom; she passed slowly from the room!

The little philosopher looked after her in grief and amazement, as one under the influence of a baleful dream might do.

His eye fell upon the letter; he picked it up; straightened it; sat down; took out his spectacles; put them on his nose, and composedly read the epistle from beginning to end!

He felt no more surprise at Magdalene's anguish and despair—gazing with dilated eyes upon the letter, he exclaimed, "Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! has she then been kept in the dark so long! Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! had I known *that*, and known the contents of this letter, I would have cast it into the fire, or burned my own right hand to cinders before ever I would have brought it to her! *Plût à Dieu!* I had known this before!" Having finished the reading, he

folded it up and put it into his pocket—saying, "This must not be left about."

Then he walked slowly up and down the room a long time in deep thought.

At length after hours had passed, he rang the bell and directed the man who answered it to send Mademoiselle Lisette, Madame's *femme de chambre* to him.

When this girl came in, he told her to go to her mistress and say that he awaited her commands for Paris.

The girl left the room, and after an absence of half-an-hour, returned with the news that Madame's apartments were fastened on the inside—that she had knocked and called gently, but having received no answer, she supposed Madame might be reposing, and feared to disturb her.

"Very well!" said the little "familiar," and dismissing the girl, he set himself down to read a paper for an hour.

Soon growing restless again, he got up and walked the floor a while, and then rang the bell a second time, and sent Lisette on a second errand to Magdalene's apartments, with precisely the same result.

Monsieur De Ville knew very well that Magdalene was very far from any sort of repose.

The little guardian was half terrified at the idea of leaving his charge in what he considered a very alarming state—*but*, it was getting late in the afternoon—his dinner hour was near—and, he was hungry! So directing Lisette to inform him if her mistress should be ill, or need his services in any manner, he left the Villa with the promise to return early in the morning.

The next morning while he sat at breakfast, in dressing-gown, night-cap and slippers, suddenly—

Magdalene stood before him like an apparition!

With face as white and moveless as death, and all the nerves and muscles drawn tight as with the action of acute pain—with eyes sunken, drawn in, and down, as by cords of extreme suffering—yet strained and burning intensely, as fire under frost. In her whole manner there was an air of still, powerful, *self-restrained frenzy*. As the little savan gazed at her in surprise and alarm, and before he found his speech, she said, in a voice unnatural from its enforced steadiness,

"I must go to England, to-day. Get all ready!"

"Go to England to-day! You are mad, Madame!" exclaimed the philosopher, recovering his speech, yet still gazing at her.

"I must leave Paris for England to-day! Get all ready!

"Leave Paris for England, to-day! *Pardonnez moi*, Madame! I have kept you standing all this time! The surprise! the delight of seeing you! Be seated, Madame!" he said, somewhat at random, wheeling a chair up and seating her in it, and giving her a half terrified attention.

"*Did you hear me?*" she asked, in a hollow voice.

"Madame! You were saying—?"

"That I must leave Paris for England, to-day!"

"Leave Paris! *You!* Pardon me, Madame! *you* leave Paris! *You*, the lionne of the day! *You! You!* in the first flush of your brilliant success! *You!* with the wreath just twined for your brow! *You!* leave the scene of your fresh triumph!"

With a painful and impatient gesture she arrested his further compliments—and said, "Look at me, and HUSH! Yes, to-day! Assist me, or tell me that you will not!"

He would have resisted her, he would have argued, entreated, flattered, coaxed her to forego her purpose—he knew and felt that there was madness in its object, but he saw in the mighty force of a will strong enough to restrain the outbreak of the frenzy that filled her heart and brain, an inflexibility that would never bend to any strength of opposition. Powerless to stay her journey, he did all that he could to expedite it. That day Magdalene left Paris, travelling fast. The third day from that, she sailed for Portsmouth.

CHAPTER III.

DESPAIR.

Medea burning
At her nature's planted stake.
Mrs. Browning.

Soon after the events recorded in our last chapter, early one morning, a cab drew up before a handsome house in Portman Square, London. The driver dismounted from his seat, and going to the cab door, received from the lady inside, a card. Then going up the front steps of the mansion, he rang the bell and delivered it to the servant who opened the door. The man receiving the card took it in the house, and after an absence of some minutes, returned with the news that his master was not at home. But now the head of a lady, closely veiled, appeared at the cab window, and she beckoned the servant to approach her. He went to her.

"Your master, Sir Clinton Carey, is not within, you say?"

"My master, Lord Cliffe, late Sir Clinton Carey, is not, madam."

"Where is he?"

"In Hertfordshire, superintending the funeral of his lordship's uncle, the late Lord Cliffe."

"When is he expected to be at home?"

"I do not know, ma'am," replied the man, dropping his eyes beneath the strained and piercing gaze of the pale and haggard lady, whom he half-suspected to be a maniac.

A colder pallor crept over the face of the lady, succeeded by an instantaneous rigidity of feature, as by the taking of a sudden resolution.

"That will do—home again!" she said respectively to the servant and to the cabman.

The next morning, at a later hour, the cab stood again before the same house. The driver got down, and opened the door, and the lady herself—looking even iller and more wasted than upon the day previous—alighted, walked up the steps of the mansion, and rang the door bell.—The same servant opened the door.

"Take this to your master's room, and, if he is not in, leave it on his table," she said, putting a letter in his hand.

The man took it, hesitatingly, looked at her in doubt a moment, and then turned to do her bidding. She stepped softly after him, up the broad hall, up the wide staircase, to the first floor, then down a long passage, near the farther extremity of which he opened a door, through which he disappeared, closing it behind him. He had scarcely done so before her hand was on the knob; she turned it, and followed him into the dressing-room of Sir Clinton Carey, or, as we must now call him, Lord Cliffe, who, in dressing-gown and slippers, with newspaper in hand, dawdled over a late breakfast. Neither Lord Cliffe nor his footman perceived her entrance, at first.

"A letter, my lord, from the lady who called in the cab yesterday," said the man, approaching, bowing, and respectfully offering the letter.

As Lord Cliffe turned to receive it, his glance fell upon Magdalene, standing within the door, and their eyes met! He started violently, gazed fixedly at her an instant, and exclaimed, in an agitated voice,

"My God, Magdalene! *You here!* And how fearfully changed! Oh, Heaven, Magdalene!—have I done this?"

With a straining gaze and an adjuring gesture, she sank into the nearest chair.

"Leave the room, Jenkins," he said, to the footman, who, wondering, obeyed.

He went to her, hastily untied and removed her bonnet, loosened the shawl about her neck, and poured out and offered her a glass of wine, which she waved away, and which he set down again,—sank upon his knees by her side, took both her cold, cold hands in his own, gazed inquiringly, imploringly in her face, and cried, in a voice full of anguish,

"Magdalene! Magdalene! My dear, dear Magdalene! What is this? Speak to me!"

She looked down in his face, and her own relaxed from its frozen rigidity, and her eyes softened from their stony fixedness, as she replied,

"I—I received a letter! Where is it? I—I think I have lost it!" and she put her hand, in pain and doubt, to her head. A spasm of agony traversed his countenance, and he said, in a voice whose utterance seemed to wring his own heart,

"Magdalene! my dearest Magdalene! Recollect yourself! What is it you are trying to say?"

Again her hand passed backwards and forwards before her brow, as though to clear away a mist that was there—and she continued to gaze on him in a vague insanity. Suddenly, by an almost omnipotent effort of will, she recovered herself. Her countenance cleared—its expression became intelligent—intense with meaning—her eyes fired, fixed, and seemed to strike deep into his soul, as she said,

"Yes, a letter! Just before leaving France, I received a letter, dated Castle Cliffe, and bearing your signature——but—*Clinton! did you write that letter!*

No language can describe the *agony of desperate hope* expressed in the tone and manner in which she put this mad question. He dared not answer it! He dared not meet her consuming gaze. He averted his head in an anguish of spirit scarcely less than her own.

"Did you write that letter?" she asked again.

"My friend!—my love!—oh, Magdalene! be calm!"

"I am. But—*Did you write that letter?*"

"'Calm!'" he exclaimed, evading her searching question. "'Calm!' *You* calm! There is a chained frenzy in your whole bearing more terrible than the most frantic fury could be! Magdalene!"

"*Did you write that letter?*"

He started from her side—paced the room with rapid strides—stopped—poured out and quaffed a large glass of brandy, and returned to her with some words of soothing import—but—

"Did you? *Did you write that lotter?*" she cried, in a low, deep, but piercing voice—her restrained excitement becoming more violent every moment, until he could almost see the burning lava of passion roll, and flame, and surge beneath the still surface.

"Magdalene!" he said, at last, in a voice of commanding tenderness, as he sat down by her and took her hand.

"DID YOU WRITE THAT LETTER?" she almost shrieked.

With a gesture of desperation, as though the reply had been torn from him, he said—

"Yes! Magdalene! I did write that letter!—but are you so agonized, my love, in knowing that you are free?" Then he stopped suddenly, as in terror, and glanced at her quickly,

the expectation of seeing some violent outbreak of furious frenzy.

He was agreeably disappointed.

With his answer, her form and face relaxed—her hands dropped into her lap, and she remained perfectly quiet. Swiftly mortal wounds cause no struggle, exhibit no agony, it is only—all over—death—naught! The shaft that strikes, at once, the brain or heart, is not felt. So it is with moral wounds. Her affection was now mortally wounded—pierced, at once, to the quick—and so she scarcely felt it. She only felt that the dread agony of suspense was quite over. The instant he had said—"Yes! Magdalene! I did write the letter!"—the last, wild, desperate, frantic hope, that had strained every nerve upon the rack of an excruciating anxiety, was cut off, and the tension was relaxed, and the torture was over; and the despair, that was ease, because it was death, had come!

An instant before she had been desperate—now she was in despair. Despair is to desperation, what death is to the death-struggle—the ease that succeeds agony. Complete despair is perfect peace, because it is insensibility, apathy, torpor.

The infusion of one drop of hope, would have aroused life, pain, agony—even as a cordial revives the victim, fainting from the rack, to new tortures. But no such cruel stimulant awaited her. There was no disturbing hope for her. Her despair, her calm, was complete.

She remained perfectly quiescent, and *he* was deceived!

Because her countenance at once relaxed—because the muscles of her face were no longer drawn into tight lines—because her eyes were no longer strained out, and burning—he was misled! He did not know that it was the snapping of her heart-strings that had relieved the tension of her nerves, and allowed her countenance to settle into the placidity of death!

She did not speak, she did not move, but sat perfectly silent and motionless, while he continued to watch her until, thoroughly deceived by her quietude, he came and sat beside her, took the hand that she did not withhold, and pressed it to his lips and to his bosom, and said—

"Magdalene! dearest Magdalene! do you not feel, notwithstanding *all*, that I love you?—that I love you more than I shall ever be able to love another?—that I love you more than life?—more than all things else, except—well! no matter! Do you not know this, Magdalene?" he said, passing his arm around her waist, drawing her, unresisting, to his bosom, and pressing his lips to hers. "Say, Magdalene! do you not feel that I love you more than life? For I *do*, Magdalene!—I *do*!" He waited for a reply.

She did not speak, but she seemed to hear, and he resumed—

"Magdalene! you are so pale, and cold, and strange! But you will get over this, my love! Magdalene! I told you,—did I not?—that in loving you, in winning your love, I willed your largest life and happiness. Magdalene! in every act of mine towards you, from first to last, I have held the same purpose! It will be your own weakness if you are not happy! Magdalene! be reasonable! be strong! be free!" He paused again.

She made no comment, but appeared to listen quietly, and he went on.

"Your social position is an eminently happy one! Your freedom from family and social ties—*shackles*—is liberty indeed!—a liberty that very few are blessed with! Many, I know, would consider your birth and condition unfortunate! So do not I! Life is given you, filled with the means of happiness! Your strong constitution, your fine vital temperament, your perfect health, your peerless beauty, your grace, genius, and accomplishments, and last and best! your crowning glory—perfect freedom!—form a combination of felicitous elements rarely brought together on this earth, and offer you a life, a happiness, scarcely to be paralelled in this world! How I envy you, Magdalene! How I—the born serf of rank, of conventionality, of public sentiment, of 'society'—envy you the nameless birth that puts no mark of ownership upon you—the social banishment, that gives you to largest liberty! You have no chains, no fetters, Magdalene! See that in the fire of your strong passions you forge none for your limbs. You are but too apt to do it! Women such as you make their own tyrants! Had I lived with you many months longer, Magdalene, your tender subserviency, your passionate devotion, would have made me the most selfish and exacting man alive! There would have been no resisting the influence! Why do you not speak to me, Magdalene?"

She looked up at him—so strangely!

"Do you know, love, that it will not do for you to stay here? Do you know that you must go home, now?"

She arose mechanically and took her bonnet.

"Tell me where you live, Magdalene—I will come and see you."

She answered as an automaton might—

"At Ridgway's Hotel, Rutland Place."

Mournfully she stood up, and mournfully left the room.

He stepped after her—drew her arm within his own, conducted her down stairs, and placed her in the cab, saying, as he closed the door of the carriage—

"I will see you to-morrow, Magdalene."

And the cab rolled off.

She reached her hotel.

She got to her room, and there sank down, down upon the floor, and rolled over, with her

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forehead in the dust!—not weeping—not fainting—but humbled, collapsed, *prostrate*—with no feeling of resentment, only the feeling of heart-broken *desolation!*—of utter, final, helpless *wretchedness!*

Mournfully she had left his house—mournfully she had returned to her lodgings. She had made no attempt to combat his purpose—no attempt to change her destiny. She felt herself—*what she was.*

Her dream of love, of faith, of ambition, and of great achievement, was at once and forever dispelled!—and what was life to her now?

She had lived all her past life to come to—THIS. She had been evoked from the nothingness of non-existence to confront—THIS—and to sink again into nonentity.

Life had been a failure, a mockery, a cheat, a taunt! She wished for the perfect oblivion of death, or the counter-irritation of pain, but death nor illness would come at her call. Despite all the spirit's failing, dying—the strong body kept up!

When a weak spirit fails and droops, a word or look of kindness or of encouragement, is sufficient to lift the light thing up again. But when a strong spirit falls, nothing but the hand of Satan or the arm of God can raise it. And Magdalene was without God in the world.

Let the curtain fall upon this picture of death in life—despair.

CHAPTER IV.

BLACK ROCK.

And in thy heart there springs a poison fountain,
Deadlier than that where bathes the Upas tree·
And in thy wrath, a nursing cat-o-mountain
Is calm as her babe's sleep compared with thee!
Halleck.

Clinton, Lord Cliffe, did not make his appearance at Ridgeway's Hotel the next morning, according to promise; nor did Magdalene expect him, nor think whether he were unable, or unwilling to keep his engagement; nor did she even remember his promise; perhaps she did not even hear him make it. Her whole being was absorbed in other thoughts and feelings.

Her soul had passed through a tremendous crisis, a terrible experience. She had, as it were, suffered death; and a new resurrection, more awful than death!—a "resurrection to damnation!" for all that was best in her was left in the grave of her blighted past—and all that was worst in her, had arisen, and was alive, feeble indeed as infancy at first, but growing with the lapse of time, into great, into mighty, avenging, demon-strength!

One fell purpose filled her life—Revenge! This had not come suddenly, had not sprung from anger, but had arisen slowly, slowly, sternly, in the feeling of the great wrong done her;—arousing her sense of that inflexible JUSTICE, that with unsparing hand metes out to the offender the full measure of his offence;—arousing all her deep, stern, unforgiving, unrelenting Indian nature, that could—through any length of time or space, or any amount of obstacle—keep its eye upon its victim, and plot and wait for its revenge;—arousing all the mighty power of her individual self;—that comprehension and strength of intellect that could embrace and gather all its great and varied powers to a focus;—that fire and force of passion that could fuse them, and forge them into one weapon;—and that strength of will that could drive it home to its end!—kindling a consuming hate, that must burn forever, or until quenched in the heart's blood of its victim—and smothered in the ruin of remorse!

This did not spring in an hour, or grow in a day, any more than it could decay or perish in the lapse of months and years. But daily, weekly, monthly, yearly, as with the natural concentrativeness of her mind, and intensity of her passions—she brooded over her great wrong, until it became the one idea that, however diseased itself, in its great strength and unity of purpose, subjected all the other strong and healthful faculties and propensities of the brain and heart to its demon power! the one idea concentrated, intensified, precipitated to monomania!

And this was the condition and history of her inner life, through the months and years of varied action that followed.

In a few days, and before she had recovered from the shock that had prostrated her, she discovered that Lord Cliffe had gone abroad.

Drawn by the attraction of destiny, rather than following the volition of her own will, she left London for Liverpool, whence, in a few days, she sailed for Norfolk, where she arrived, after a tedious passage of six weeks.

During her passage over, her plans of immediate action had been laid out.

She could not think of going to her friends—indeed as all her soul was absorbed in one great passion, her desire to see them was very feeble.

Fortunately, she happened to have with her, the packet of testimonials, and letters of introduction and recommendation that had ben given her by friends and acquaintances when she had first left home to go as a governess into the world. These were invaluable to her now—they stood in lieu of friends, favor, and patronage.

With these, stopping but a night in Norfolk, she set out on a journey to Kentucky, determined to stop at the first town or village that should please her, and there to open a day-school.

After more than a week's journey by stage

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coach, through the roughest, though the most picturesque routes in Virginia—she crossed the border line into Kentucky through a pass of the Cumberland Mountains.

They came to the little hamlet of Black Rock, situated in a cleft of the mountain, which had nothing to recommend it but the savage aspect of the scenery in unison with the morose mood of her own mind. Here the stage remained all night, and here she determined to stop for a few days, with the intention of surveying the capabilities of the place for her purpose, and, if it suited her, of taking up her abode there for the present.

The morning after her arrival, she sent for the landlord and began to make the necessary inquiries as to whether the neighborhood were provided with a school—if it were not whether it could support a school. The landlord answered her questions hesitatingly, looking at her furtively the while.

Her youth, her remarkable beauty, her unprotected situation, the independence of her manner, and even the richness of her plain dark travelling habit, all tended to excite suspicion. Magdalene read this on his countenance. It did not daunt or distress her in the least.

"If your neighborhood is—as is most probable—in want of a school, and if it can give a teacher, in return for her services, enough for the merest necessaries of life, I will remain here and open a school. I like the air of the mountains. I like the looks of the scenery—and I have brought with me testimonials that shall satisfy the most cautious of your citizens."

The longer the landlord looked at her, the better he thought of her. He saw that it was courage and self-reliance that had brought her without protection into his neighborhood. When, at last, she spoke of her testimonials, he lost his reserve, and admitted that the neighborhood *was* very much in want of a school, and gave her the names of the most prominent citizens in that sparsely settled country, advising her to see and confer with them.

Many of these in the course of that week, Magdalene called upon. Her youth and beauty, her loveliness, and her singular enterprise excited much wonder and suspicion, that was finally lost in admiration of her self-reliance and courage.

How little did they know how much those qualities covered.

Her testimonials were perfectly satisfactory. Her vouchers were among the most respectable and eminent men in the land! What was there to fear, or suspect? *Nothing*, had Magdalene been alive in her better nature. But all her actions—notwithstanding their energy and rapidity—were superficial.

Underneath all—like a subterranean river—rolled on the dark current of her master passion to its end.

A school-house was built for her, and in the course of a few weeks, a school of twenty pupils were gathered together—and for her private accommodation, board was obtained in a family in the village.

While she had been in energetic action, with obstacles to meet and overcome, she had been, in some degree, diverted from her darker thoughts, and passions, and purposes. But now that all obstacles were surmounted, and all difficulties were cleared from her path, and she sat down quietly among her pupils, her strong restless, unoccupied energies, began to goad and sting her, to torture and force her from the quietness, safety, and repose of her present life—even as they had done twice before.

Once, when the vague longings of strong life for full and free expression, had prompted her first effort to leave the home of her childhood.

Again, when love was her master motive and she had broken wildly, recklessly, from the protection of her friends, and cast herself alone into the whirlpool of life for the bare chance of meeting her beloved, or losing the sense of dull disappointment in the whirl and jar and rapid change of scenes and events.

Now, neither love nor ambition ruled her, but the darker passion that arose upon the ruins of both. To the unrest of her spirit—intolerable beyond endurance was the monotony of her present mode of life. And she had not been there many weeks before she resolved to quit it. Rush, hurry, whirl, excitement, was what she wanted. The affection of her pupils and the kindness of their parents, could no more soothe the fierceness of her mental malady, than Summer breezes could heal a burn. The unrest, the war of her spirit must seek peace in strife—rest in struggle.

Her taste for the histrionic art had never left her. It recurred to her now in great power. Many things conspired to urge and to attract her to this fascinating but laborious and perilous profession—general fitness for the art—a physical organization remarkable for fearless beauty, wonderful strength, and marvellous power of expression; lastly, the conscious possession of the very highest order of histrionic genius, and a very strong vocation for the profession. Besides, it offered her life, action, excitement, and perhaps:

The means to an end to which—underneath all these things—the deep but poignant sense of wrong goaded her!

Magdalene warned her employers that she would leave them at the end of the ensuing term—advising them at the same time to advertise for a teacher to take her school, which was now in a very flourishing condition. Her patrons opposed her resolution, and sought to induce her

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to stay; but Magdalene with her customary contumacy, resisted all arguments, entreaties, and inducements—laughing aloud, when, as a last bribe, they offered to raise her salary.

At the end of the term, therefore, Magdalene, bearing with her that invaluable packet of testimonials, as a safe guard against continued misconstruction and insult—left Black Rock for the Eastern city which she had fixed upon as the theatre of her new enterprise.

CHAPTER V.

THE ACTRESS.

Eloquence!—her gift is thine which reaches
The heart and makes the wisest head its sport.
Halleck.

Every once in awhile our story approximates so near the literal truth, that I tremble for those, yet living, who were concerned in its events. And so it is in the present instance—for I think that many of our oldest theatre-goers will recollect the debutante of whom I am about to write, and the extreme, though short lived enthusiasm, that greeted her debut at the Old Federal Street Theatre, Boston—possibly not though—possibly her short and brilliant career may have entirely passed from the memory of man—no fame is so ephemeral as that of the histrionic "star"—or, more properly—*comet*.

It was just before the opening of the two great theatres for the winter campaign, that Magdalene reached Boston. Though very short in funds, it was a part of her policy to go at once to the best, and consequently the most expensive hotel in the city. Here she engaged a chamber and private parlor, and from this place she addressed a note to Mr. P———, the manager of the first theatre in the city, requesting an interview, and stating her reason for desiring it.

The next day she received a civil reply to her note, declining the proposed interview, and stating that the manager's arrangements for the ensuing season were all completed. Magdalene smiled to herself at this answer. It was just what she expected, and was prepared for—for what indeed should Mr. P——— know of *her*, her character and purposes, her personal appearance, or her capabilities—she might be old, ugly, and conceited, for aught that he knew, or cared to know to the contrary—but *she* knew that she was young, vigorous, beautiful, talented, and resolute. She wrote to him again—in this strain—

"All that I request of you, is to come and see me—to hear me read and recite—then if you are not disposed to offer me an engagement, I shall assuredly not press the matter upon you, any more than I shall repeat this request again, if now it be refused. Listen: You would not mind the outlay of five dollars upon a lottery ticket for the chance, one in a thousand, of winning a prize. Valuable as your precious time may be, it cannot be worth *more* to you than five dollars the half-hour. Spend that half-hour with me as you would spend five dollars on a lottery ticket, for the chance of winning a prize. If the ticket, myself, turn out a prize, the half-hour has been well expended. If a blank, you will have only lost—half-an-hour. As for me, I know myself, and have no doubt or fear as to the result of our interview. It is proper to say to you, that in the event of your *now* declining my proposition, I shall immediately apply to the manager of the Tremont Street Theatre. My motive for giving your establishment the preference, being merely the respect for its greater age."

There is something in sound faith that is very contagious. When one is thoroughly persuaded of any one thing, it is comparatively easy to persuade others of the same. The calm assurance, as well perhaps as the oddity of this letter, brought Mr. P——— the same day to the hotel, to see, as he afterward said, what strange sort of an individual it was that could write such a queer letter. When he was introduced in Magdalene's private parlor, and found a young, strong, and beautiful woman awaiting him, his countenance betrayed a curious blending, and conflict of more emotions, than it is needful to enumerate and classify. Magdalene arose to receive him.

"Miss Mountjoy, I presume," said he, bowing.

Magdalene inclined her head in an affirmative, and set him a chair. He took it, and not to lose any time, or to give him any chance of misunderstanding her, Magdalene at once opened the object of the interview, by saying,

"Mr. P———, I have been a governess and a school-mistress—the profession of a teacher is not at all to my taste, and I desire to change it for one very opposite in every respect—for that of the stage, for which I have a strong vocation, and some genius, which you may put to the test. But first, as you are, or should be, most interested for the personal respectability of an applicant—these are my testimonials!"

And she laid her packet before the eyes of the astonished manager. He certainly had not expected *this*. He opened them, and glanced at them merely as a matter of form. He saw that they were what they professed to be. He tied them up and returned them. He was beginning to feel a strong curiosity and interest in the beautiful girl before him, whose manner was so full at once of freedom and reserve.

"Pardon me—have you no family, young lady—no friends?"

"None nearer and having greater claims upon me than those whose names stand at the foot of my testimonials; but, Mr. P———, I do not wish to take up more of your valuable time than is strictly necessary. I am ready to read, or recite for you, as soon as you please."

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"What line of character do you propose for yourself?" inquired the manager.

"The sterner impersonations of tragedy—Lady Macbeth—"

"Ah!" said the manager, with as much incredulity in his face as was polite to let appear.

"Yes! I could play Lady Macbeth, Clytemnestra, Electra, Medea, Joan D'Arc, Elvira—and that role. I do not think I could personate well the soft and gentle, and love-lorn characters even of tragedy. I could not enter into and impersonate Juliet, Ophelia, or Desdemona! No! I could understand, enter into, and impersonate Richard III. with more effect.

"Youthful lovers of this art, however, seldom know how much or how little they may be able to do in any particular line. It is common for those who fancy themselves qualified by talent for the highest walks of tragedy, to be very fit for low comedy, and for nothing else. It is curious that the young and happy invariably prefer tragedy, or melo-drama, before comedy! It is because they have no misery of their own, that fictitious misery possesses the zest of novelty for them."

"I said that you could test my abilities, sir," said Magdalene, with some little hauteur.

"I beg your pardon—I shall be pleased, Miss a—Mount—to hear you read the supper scene in Macbeth."

Magdalene took her pocket edition of Shakspeare from the table, and turning to the scene, commenced and read it without the least falter or mistake, though nervous trepidation.

"You have, among others, two very rare requisites of success in a debutante."

"Hardihood and effrontery, I suppose you mean?"

"Self-esteem and self-command."

"Simple strength of physical organization, sir—are you satisfied with me in other respects, or shall I read anything else?"

"Yes—if you please—Juliet's hymn to the night—I should like to test your abilities in the —in what you call, with some irreverence, the 'love-lorn' parts."

"I do not like it! nevertheless—" and Magdalene turning to the right page read that.

"Very fair, very fair indeed."

"But the *other* scene—the supper scene in Macbeth—I hope it met your expectations?"

"Decidedly *not*, Miss Mountjoy," said the manager, with a singular smile. "I see that you pique yourself upon your reading of this particular sort of thing—but—pardon me!—have you ever had the advantage of comparing your own somewhat novel style of reading with that of others—have you ever, in short, seen the play of *Macbeth*—for instance—performed?"

"Yes! several times—you look surprised!"

"I am—your conception of the character of Lady Macbeth, your style of reading the part, strikes me as so entirely original, yet, at the same time, is full of truth and nature, that I had supposed—"

"What?"

"Well, in fact, that you could have had no opportunity of copying the manner of another. The histrionic art is eminently an imitative one. A great actor fixes a certain style of playing a character, and all the lesser actors, with more or less precision, copy that. It is difficult not to imitate. Original genius, in any art, I think, comes, not from those educated in, and familiar with its common routine—but—from those new and unfamiliar with it. Benjamin West is an instance among the painters. You have certainly strong and striking originality of conception and style, but that is what I cannot understand in a frequenter of the theatre."

"I never was a frequenter of dramatic entertainments, and, moreover, my style was formed before I ever saw a play."

"That accounts for it."

"But—you have, as yet, evaded the main question—are you satisfied—will you give me an opportunity of submitting my histrionic abilities, great or small, to public criticism in a debut?"

"I am more than satisfied. I told you that you had not met my expectations—you have not, inasmuch as I expected my expended half hour would have drawn a blank, whereas it has drawn a prize."

"You *are* satisfied then?"

"Perfectly."

"And your 'arrangements for the season are'—*not*—'completed?'" said Magdalene, with a half-suppressed sardonic smile.

"Not until I have arranged with you the preliminaries of a debut, and perhaps afterward—the terms of an engagement, and for this purpose I will call on you—again—at—your first convenient hour."

"To-morrow, then, at this time," said Magdalene, and the manager bowed himself out.

Faithful to his engagement he called the next day at the appointed hour, and in that interview it was arranged that as Magdalene wished, for many reasons, to leave her hotel, she should, for the present, take up her abode with the family of the manager, who, with his wife and daughters, resided in the city. It was farther stipulated that she should enter her new profession under a *nomme de plume* by which she should be known in private as in public life. Thus—in having selected a city as far from the scenes of her childhood as was then practicable, and in having changed her name, Magdalene had cut off every external link that bound her to her former life and associations.

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The character selected for her *debut* was that

of Lady Macbeth—the day of her first appearance was fixed at some weeks distance, in order to give the debutante the advantage of many rehearsals in which to become familiarized with the *mécanique* of the stage, and to prepare the new scenery and new costumes that were to lend additional attraction and *eclat* to the occasion.

The night of the debut at length arrived—every circumstance was fortunate—the weather was very fine—the debutante herself in high health and beauty—the *corps-dramatique* in good order, and what was better in good humor—and the public, it would appear, propitious. Magdalene dressed for her part without the least doubt, fear or tremor of the nerves, and smiled scornfully when her chaperone, Mrs. P———l, herself an *artiste* of superior merit, advised her not to think of the audience as a collection of sentient individuals, but to look upon it as a mere panorama of faces.

"I shall certainly look at the audience and pick out some one to speak *at*," said Magdalene. "I know, beforehand, that I cannot play to vacancy, Now give me the property 'letter' for my hour has come," and so saying, as composedly as though she had been a veteran of the boards, Magdalene sauntered through the side scenes and took her place upon the stage. A round of applause accorded to the young, beautiful, and majestic woman, or, to the *debutante*, rather than to the genius of which they, as yet, knew nothing, greeted her entrance. Neither did this enthusiastic welcome hurry, in the least, the well governed pulses that beat faster or slower only by her own will. She stood there, indeed, the stern inflexible woman—the woman of "demoniac firmness" whom she came to personate, conscious but careless of her coming triumph.

Her debut was, as had been confidently expected, a complete triumph. But all successful debuts are so much alike, the same "enthusiastic greetings," the same "rounds of applause," the same showers of "bouquets" and "wreaths" welcomed the entrances, attended the scenes, and followed the exits of our debutante, and the curtain finally fell, amid a tempest of acclamation, in which the *nomme de plume* of the new favorite was the only distinguishable word. Attended by the manager, she obeyed the stormy summons, by entering at the right of the stage, passing before the curtain, curtseying, and passing off at the left. In answer to the congratulations of the well-pleased manager, Magdalene's lip curled in scorn, as she said,

"Yes!—they have patted me on the head!—Pity I have not lubricity and flexibility enough to wriggle and twist as a dog should, when receiving such distinguished marks of approbation! Pah! In a word, I do not like this sort of reception! Think of the thrice-distilled quintessence of absurdity in showering flowers upon—a murderess!—as they did in that murdering scene! I do not think that I have a very keen sense of the ridiculous—I am too much in earnest; yet, had it not been for the faculty of thoroughly losing individual identity in an ideal impersonation, I should have ruined myself and you by laughing out in the midst of all that folly! What do they mean? Real and sound appreciation would not have manifested itself in that way. No! If my acting *really* merited approbation, I did not *really* get it. All that fuss was—fustian! nothing more! Genuine approbation of a play and part so sombre as *that*, would not have been so noisy—would not have vented itself in a shower of *flowers!* At all events, I will not go before the curtain if they call me again—that is certain. For my own private pleasure, and the enjoyment I find in the art, as well as for their entertainment, I will use my best abilities in the role for which I am engaged! Yes! in letter and in spirit, I will keep 'the bond'—but beyond that, I will not go."

This was the haughty, scornful spirit in which Magdalene received the testimonials of public favor. Two years before, she could not have been so bitter and ungrateful. This was the instance of a great soul ruined by a great wrong. Now she looked upon herself and the world with a jaundiced eye, and from a false point of view, as antagonists.

"I do not ask its pity, its sympathy, its love, its admiration! I ask only a *quid pro quo* for value received!" she said, in the stern and savage acrimony of her heart.

So went off her debut.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEEP HEART.

One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws
Its shadow alike o'er her joys and her woes,
Than which life nothing brighter nor darker can bring,
For which joy hath no balm, or affliction no sting.
Moore.

It was natural and deplorable that the profession chosen by Magdalene—the particular role of characters taken by her—the passions, emotions, and sentiments adopted as her own for the time—should have tended to foster that very spirit of hate and revenge, which had taken complete possession of her heart. But in the very fact of having preferred this line of strong demoniac creations—and of personating such with the greatest power, she was true to the stern and cruel unity of her own spirit and purpose.

Yes! amidst all her multifarious occupations

and amusements, the fell purpose of her soul was remembered—under all the superficial excitements of her life, the deep strong under-current of her soul rolled onwards to its fatal consummation.

She had many admirers, some suitors; among the number of the latter, was one whose position scarcely entitled him to the distinction—il Signor Bastiannelli, an Italian, the leader of the orchestra—and whom no degree of coldness, hauteur, or scorn could possibly discourage or repulse. He devoted himself to Magdalene with the most determined persistence, yet with a manner that so admirably blended high respect with deep affection, that no open offence could be taken.

Magdalene concluded a long engagement and a longer re-engagement at Boston, and then set out Southward on a professional tour, stopping at New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Charleston, and so on to New Orleans—only avoiding Richmond in her route. Signor Bastiennelli distinguished himself by breaking his compact with the managers of the Old Federal Street Theatre, leaving Boston and following his guiding star, or rather his misleading comet, on her erratic orbit. To leave metaphor, the Signor Bastiennelli made himself very conspicuous by his pursuit of the new favorite—travelling in the stages and steamboats in which she travelled, stopping at the cities where she stopped—putting up at the hotels where she boarded, and going to the theatre every night when she performed—where, seated in the middle seat of the front row of the pit, immediately before the footlights, he would lean forward, prop his elbows on his knees, prop his black muzzled chin upon his palms, and pour from under his shaggy and lowering brows, consuming streams of fire upon his inamorata, from the moment of her entree on the scene until that of her exit—when relaxing all his muscles he would sigh heavily, sink back and smoulder out.

It was on her return tour, that, still followed by her satelite, Bastiennelli, Magdalene stopped at Washington, to fulfil a short engagement. One night, when personating the Queen in her own tragedy of Gyges—in the midst of that one scene between the arrogant and outraged Queen and the King's favorite and colleague, in which the former assures the latter that himself, or his royal master, *one* of the two men whose gaze had feloniously profaned the sacredness of her unveiled beauty *must die*, and that she would live the wife of the survivor—in the midst of this scene, the eyes of Magdalene turned and fell upon LORD CLIFFE, seated in the box of the British Minister, immediately in front of the stage.

He had recognized her evidently—their eyes met—his full of tenderness, hers blazing! Did she pause or falter? No! A great impulse was given to her heart and brain, and she played out her part to the end with unprecedented power and passion—"bringing down the house" in a tempest of enthusiastic applause.

When the performance was over and she was about to retire by the stage-door, to her carriage that was in waiting, she met Lord Cliffe face to face!

"Magdalene! my lost love!" he began in a rich, full, tender voice, taking her hand.

"STOP!" she exclaimed, snatching her hand away and folding her arms, while her countenance darkened, her eyes fired—and she said in the low, deep thunder-tone of intense hate: "You are deceived in me—your address shows it. When we parted last, I left you under a false impression. You supposed me—heart crushed, spirit broken—and so I was! and you supposed me docile, submissive, because I was quiet—and so I was not! for, mark you! *my quietness was the quietness of the* STUNNED LION! not of the lamb. I come of that Red Race who never yet betrayed a friend, or forgave a traitor! Yet! as I am avenging and not traitorous or deceitful, I could not strike without warning you! I am your MORTAL FOE!" and thus, as it were throwing down the gauntlet of a fell defiance, before he had recovered from his surprise, she folded her mantle around her, passed before him, and stepped into her carriage, which was immediately driven off.

"Monomaniac!" muttered Lord Cliffe, as he too left the premises.

Magdalene returned to her hotel, where, in her private parlor, she found Bastiennelli awaiting her return to renew and press his suit. Magdalene listened to him with more favor and patience than she had ever shown before. When he had urged all he had to say again and again, with all the eloquence, energy, fire and passion of his race and clime, Magdalene said to him,

"Signor, leave me now, and to-morrow near this hour, I pledge you my word that I will give you an answer."

And he left her full of hope.

The next morning she raised the Italian to the seventh heaven of happiness by permitting him to go with her to the rehearsal. At night again she allowed him to wait on her to the theatre, and attend her behind the scenes. It was at the close of the first act that Magdalene entered upon the vacant stage—then separated by the canvass curtain from the audience—and while the men were shifting some back scenes, beckoned the Signor Bastiennelli to the left hand front entrance, where she stood. He came to her side—startled, astounded by the expression of stern, relentless determination upon her face, as she laid her hand upon his arm, and pressing it until he shrank, said, in the same low, deep tone of earnestness—

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"You love me, you say?"

"St. Peter! lady—yes!"

"Signor! for one I should love, I would, if needful, lose my soul. How much would *you* do for one you love?" she said, her fingers pressing his arm like a vice, and her eyes intently fixed on his, striking their glances deep into his soul.

"Lady! try me!" aspirated the Italian, in a deep voice.

She drew him within an angle, between the side scene and the curtain, where, unseen themselves, they had a full view of the audience; and pressing again his arm, with the same vice-like grasp, she pointed to a gentleman who occupied, alone, the British Minister's box, and said

"Do you see that man?"

The quick, piercing eyes of the Italian followed her index.

"Yes," he said, in a low tone.

"He is a very handsome man," said she, mockingly.

The Italian frowned.

"And very graceful, accomplished, and fascinating."

The Italian scowled darkly.

"I loved him once, and it was for him I would have gone to perdition, had he—"

The Italian had started violently at the commencement of this sentence, and now stood gazing at him with the consuming fire of jealousy and rage burning in his eyes!—*with less fierceness than they burned in his heart.*

"Had he been true to me. But he was false. He LIED to me. He won my hand in a false marriage, by a LIE. Had he committed the higher crime of killing my body, the laws of the land would have demanded his life. He has perpetrated the greater atrocity of destroying my life of life—and the laws have no adequate justice for me. I should become a mockery, a by-word, a laughing-stock by making an appeal to them! I must avenge myself. I am of a savage race who never forget or forgive! I have registered a vow never to marry while my mortal foe lives! You are an Italian! You understand me!"

"St. Judas, Signorina! you demand this man's death as the price of your hand!" exclaimed the Italian, appalled.

"It is the sacrifice to a stern JUSTICE that I demand," said Magdalene.

"Lady! I will give you your answer to-morrow," said the Italian, after a thoughtful pause, and in a deep, significant tone.

Magdalene left him and passed out—her countenance darkly illumined with the lurid light of a stern triumph.

Magdalene saw nothing more of the Italian until late the next night—the last night of her engagement at Washington—when she was to appear in her own original character of the Queen, in the tragedy of Candaules. At the rising of the curtain she looked anxiously for Lord Cliffe, and missed him from among the audience. The drama progressed, and still he did not come.—The drop-scene fell at the end of the first act, and arose at the commencement of the second, and yet he had not made his appearance. Finally, the green curtain fell upon the last scene in the last act of the tragedy, and Magdalene left the theatre in a state of intense anxiety. The continued absence of the Italian, together with that of Lord Cliffe, filled her with the most horrible conjectures. She thought a vengeance as complete—a tragedy as terrible—had that day been enacted in real life, as the one presented that night upon the stage. She returned to her lodgings in a mood of dark, morose, but suppressed excitement. She sent to the bar to inquire for the Signor Bastiennelli, and received word that he had not been in since the preceding night. She sent again with the request that he might wait on her in her apartment as soon as he should return; and then she sat down firmly, sternly, rigidly, restraining the frenzy that was racking heart and brain, as her soul shuddered—shuddered upon the dread boundary line that separates the purpose from the deed, the revenge from the REMORSE!

The clock struck the hour of one—of two—and the Italian had not returned In an hour more she was to leave Washington. Her place had been taken in the stage that was to leave Washington at three o'clock for Baltimore, where she was engaged to appear at the principal theatre the next evening. But her engagement and her speedy departure were both forgotten in the fatal concentration of her thoughts, and intensity of her emotions in one fell subject, and she remained in the same fixed posture of self-guarded, self-governed madness, until the clock struck a quarter to three, when a loud rap at her chamber door startled her. It was the chamber-maid come to tell her that the stage was at the door, and bringing a porter to take down her baggage. Never in her life had Magdalene broken an engagement, and with her habitual justice, she determined not to break this, but to depart even without seeing Bastiennelli. She directed the porter to take down her trunks, and rising, with apparently perfect calmness, put on her travelling dress, and was preparing to follow, when a hurried step was heard upon the stairs, and Bastiennelli, travel-stained and travel-worn, stood before her.

"For the Virgin's sake, Signorina! one moment!—come!" and he took her hand and hurried her back into the private parlor.

"Well! speak!" said Magdalene, in a deep,

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but steady voice—"speak! and quickly! shortly! for I have little time to lose, the coach starts in less than half an hour!"

Yes! though reason shook upon her throne, Magdalene remembered, and governed herself, and spoke in a calm, though stern voice.

"Signorina, I will!" said the Italian, in an agitated tone, stepping back, closing the door, and returning to her side.

"What have you to tell me! Quick!"

"Listen! Sit down!" he said, pointing to one chair, and dropping himself into another.

She sank into the indicated seat—he drew his chair to her side, took her hand, pressed it to his lips, to his heart, and said—

"Signorina, your great wrong remains yet unavenged; the traitor goes yet unpunished!"

She snatched her hand from his clasp, darting a look of indignation at him, and exclaimed—

"And *you* return, alive and unhurt, to tell me so!"

"Lady! listen!—last night I sent him a challenge!"

"Fool!" muttered Magdalene.

"I received no reply."

"Of course not!" she said, with withering scorn.

"This morning I called at his lodgings."

"Idiot!"

The Italian scowled.

"Well! what then?"

"He had left them—no one knew for what destination."

"Certainly! Assuredly!"

"I need scarcely tell you, madame, scornful and incredulous as you affect to be, that I did not rest until I obtained what I supposed to be a clue to his whereabout, and followed it for fifty miles, when I discovered the imposture of which I had been the dupe; or perhaps the mistake, of which I had been the victim; and I lost no time in hurrying back to you!"

"COWARD!" exclaimed Magdalene, in the most taunting and exasperating tone, as her fine face darkened and flashed.

The Italian started—frowned darkly—impulsively dived his hand into his bosom—in the shades of which the handle of a poignard glittered—but withdrew it quickly again—smoothed his face, and composed his manner, as he said, calmly—

"Lady, you use your sex's privilege—had a man uttered that word—"

"You would mercifully and prudently have allowed him ample time and space in which to make his escape from your consuming vengeance. Now listen, Signor!"

"Madame, the coach waits!" cried a waiter, rapping at the door.

"Yes! I am coming. Listen, Signor Bastiennelli!—I am not one to be trifled with! No amount of resolution, of determination, of energy, of effort that is not SUCCESSFUL, will win one favoring smile or glance from me! The CONSUMMATION OF JUSTICE is what I will have!"

"The stage, madam!" vociferated a voice from the foot of the stairs.

"I come! Farewell, Bastiennelli!"

"I attend you, lady," said the Italian, and he accompanied her down stairs, placed her in the coach, closed the door, watched the vehicle until it had rolled out of sight, and returned, to prepare to follow her the next day, saying—

"Aye, my Queen! play the despot! but I have that which the recklessness of your own nature has given me! Your secret—your avowed criminal purpose—and by it, the mastery of your fate! By *my* passion you would have made me your slave!—your tool! By *your own* passion, I become your master, and the disposer of your fate! Instead of rivetting fetters upon my wrists, you have placed a weapon in my hand—instead of chaining me a slave to your triumphal car, you have armed and invested me with power over your life! Look to it!"

While this dark conspiracy against his life had been proceeding, Lord Cliffe, unconscious of any danger he might be leaving behind, left the theatre at the close of the performance, and returned to his hotel, roused up his servant from his first sleep, gave directions for his horses to be saddled, mounted one, and, attended by his servant on the other, left the hotel and the city, with the intention of throwing two days' journey into one, and of reaching Prospect Hall, according to appointment, that evening.

And thither—as we are now weary of the heart-scorching phases of Magdalene's terrible life—thither, as it is now Spring, and the country will be pleasant, and the society of Virginia and even of Bruin and Gulliver will be refreshing—thither we will precede him to more peaceful scenes and better company.

CHAPTER VII.

VIRGINIA AND HELEN.

You must endure, yet loving all the while,
Above yet never separate from your kind,
Meet every frailty with the gentlest smile,
Though to no possible depth of evil blind.
This is the riddle you have left to solve;
But in the task you shall not work alone,
For, while the worlds about the sun revolve,
God's heart and mind are ever with His own.

Milnes

After spending the Winter in Richmond, early in the Spring, Judge Washington and his granddaughter, Virginia, had returned to Prospect

Plains. But before going farther, let me briefly sum up the few events of the last three years of Virginia's life—the three years that we have passed in Magdalene's company. From the shock of her sudden separation from Joseph Carey, Virginia suffered a long and severe illness, leaving her at the close of its acute stage, so enfeebled in body and mind, as to make change of air and scene, and retirement absolutely necessary.

Therefore it was that in the month of May following, Judge Washington took her to the Sunny Isle—to which place he also invited Helen and Theodore Hervey to bear her company; and here he gave his whole time and attention to the recovery and re-invigoration of his beloved child; and here he kept up a continued correspondence, as far as circumstances would admit of it, with Sir Clinton Carey in Europe, and with Joseph Carey in India.

At the close of the Summer, Virginia—"resigned, not happy"—was taken by her grandfather to Prospect Plains, to spend the Autumn, and to receive from the hands of the Bishop the rites of Christian confirmation; for Judge Washington, with all his lively charity for other sects, was a somewhat rigid observer of the forms and ceremonies of his church.

Here, however, a great trial awaited them—here as Magdalene had surmised, they had written to her several times and receiving no answer, they had written to Major Lincoln, and from him received the startling news that she had left them two months before. This news overwhelmed Judge Washington and Virginia with grief and anxiety. Greatly did Judge Washington reproach himself for having permitted her to leave his protection; bitterly did Virginia lament fancied coldness, fancied neglect and forgetfulness on her own part, which might she supposed have alienated her sister. This was the first effect of their first shock and dismay. Afterward Judge Washington said, as he caressed the weeping Virginia,

"Our only fault towards Magdalene has been, the having lost sight of her these several months past—we must not spend the time in idle regret, but must do all that we can to find her."

And accordingly every possible means was used to that effect—but as the reader already knows without success. Preparation for the approaching solemn ceremony of confirmation, by which she should renew in her own person the Christian vows made for her by her sponsors in baptism, now claimed Virginia's whole attention, and by engaging her thoughts in a more exalted subject of meditation, withdrew them from painfully dwelling upon her sorrows.

They spent that year at Prospect Plains.

The next Winter—being the third from the separation and dispersion of their family circle—the Judge and his grand-child prepared to go and spend the Winter in Richmond, where Sir Clinton Carey, now Lord Cliffe, was expected to join them.

They reached Richmond early in December—and soon after their settlement in their city home, they were joined by Lord Cliffe, who had just come over from England.

Whether it were that "practice makes perfect," and that Clinton Lord Cliffe was now an adept

"In winning, fettering, moulding, welding, banding
The hearts of millions till they move as one—"

or whether it were simply that time, study, and close association, acquainted him perfectly with Virginia's individual heart and mind—thus teaching him how to adapt himself to her taste, and recommend himself to her favor—I know not; but it is certain that with his fine tact and fascinating blandishments, with the splendor of his talents, the brilliancy of his conversation, and the grace and charm of his manner, he succeeded—not only in blinding her naturally refined instinctive insight, and overcoming her preconceived ideas of his character; but even—and this was a *highly important step*, an immense stride towards success—awakened a tender remorse in her bosom, for having been so harsh and unjust in her former estimate of the character of one so noble and so gentle.

And so passed the Winter—every day adding to the power of Lord Cliffe over the heart of our Ginnie.

And in this stage of affairs, when they were about to return to Prospect Plains for the Spring and Summer, Lord Cliffe urged Judge Washington for permission to speak to Virginia upon the subject nearest to his heart.

But still Judge Washington entreated him to forbear yet a little while—not to lose the ground he had gained in Virginia's affections, by shocking her with a precipitate avowal of his wish to make her his wife.

And so, about the middle of March they separated—the Judge and Virginia leaving Richmond for Prospect Hall, and Lord Cliffe going to Washington City, on business that would occupy him for a week or two, but promising at least by the first of April to be with them.

It was now the first of April, and near the close of a soft, bright Spring day, that Virginia Washington and Helen Hervey sat together in the upper front piazza of Prospect Hall, alternately working or noting the beauty of the scenery, and conversing in a low and confidential tone. At a short distance from them stood in attendance the negro waiting-maid of Miss Washington.

Virginia was engaged in embroidering a fine

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mull collar, Helen in knitting a lamb's wool stocking, and the colored girl in leaning over the parapet, watching the turkeys as they flew up to their roosts in the trees near the house.

It was a clear, bright, beautiful evening, and unusually warm for the early season. The sun was setting *behind* the house, and casting the piazza and its occupants into the deep shadow that extended, long and black, across the terrace and the lawn, and towards the Plains, enlivening, by the contrast of its darkness, the brilliant light of the emerald green fields that stretched flashing out to the distant dark waters of the Chesapeake, bounding the horizon.

Observe the young women as they gaze softly in reverential silence upon the still, bright beautiful scene!

Helen Hervey is, in almost every respect, the same woman that we saw her last—pale, dark, hollow-featured, picturesque, spiritual.

Over Virginia's form and features, air, manner and tone, there has passed a great change. Her eyes have lost somewhat of their flashing splendor; her complexion its dazzling radiance; her voice its joyous lightness; her manner its jubilant vivacity; and this seemed the effect, not so much of cherished sorrow or of ill-health, as of deeper emotions and more earnest thoughts.—Virginia had remained a few minutes with her hands and her work resting on her lap, idle and gazing thoughtfully upon the evening landscape, until the sharp outlines of light and shade softened and blended in the sinking of the sun beneath the horizon. Then, resuming her needle and her conversation at the same moment, she said—

"And so you really refuse Broke Shields, and suffer him to go? How strange, dearest Helen! How perfectly unaccountable!"

"Do you think so?"

"Why, yes. Just see. You were playmates in infancy, fellow-students in childhood, lovers in youth, deeply and strongly attached friends in maturity. Your exclusive mutual affection, your constancy and fidelity have been proverbial, and your marriage has been expected for years past, by your friends on both sides, who are quite agreed upon the subject; and yet you refuse him, and suffer him to leave you, thus wounding his heart and your own—for you love him still, Helen!—By those fast-falling tears you do! Why do you weep, yet permit him who loves you so well,—who deserves your love so well—to depart? Tell me, dear Helen!'

"I will!—I will tell you! Look at my pale and hollow cheeks and hollow eyes! Consider my languor and that depression of spirits which even family and social affections and Christian faith and hope conjoined, cannot always relieve!"

"Well, dearest Helen, I should think the faithful love of one so noble-hearted as Broke Shields would cure all that!"

"Ah, this languor, this depression may indicate the existence of some obscure and wasting malady. If this be so, or while there is a doubt about it, I ought not to marry. And if no point of duty were involved, still I have too honest a friendship for dear Broke, to afflict all the best years of his young manhood with the burden and the sorrow of my fading and failing life."

"Ah, but he loves you so! he loves you so that he would rather be with you, and, if needful, devote his health, and strength, and life to sustaining and consoling you in your feebleness and languor for years, than to suffer the banishment and the absence that he now does; put it to your own heart. If Broke were ill and you were healthy, would you not rather be with him in his sickness and sorrow than anywhere else?"

"It is not what one would *rather* do, but what they would be right in doing, which must be considered. I will never be married while my health is so precarious."

"Dear Helen," said Virginia, looking at her with eyes full of deep affection, "do not speak so sadly. You speak too seriously of this. Why, you are stronger than I am, yet I confidently hope and expect to recover full health and strength. This autumn, father talks of taking me to the South of France. You shall go with us, if you will consent, and your parents can be persuaded to part with you. My father has set his heart upon having your company out. Now, if the sea voyage and the change of climate does me any sort of good, as the physician avows that it will, why the same means must quite restore you."

"I thank you and your grandfather, dearest Ginnie. I am not startled at your kind offer, you perceive. No degree of kindness from you or your grandfather surprises me in the least. I am your great debtor, and must always continue so to be; but I think the sea voyage and the change of climate will not avail me. That it promises to restore *you*, Ginnie, is the greatest evidence that it will fail to restore *me*. We are of opposite constitutions and temperaments, Ginnie, as opposite as our complexions are!—Besides, *your* indisposition is comparatively recent and temporary. *I* have been from childhood what I am now. Dear Ginnie, I have given you, and *you alone*, the secret motive of my rejection of Broke. Keep my confidence, and now let us talk of something else. Magdalene—have you ever heard from her?"

"Ah, *no*. Every means taken for the discovery of her abode or fate has failed! She is dead or lost to us forever, the restless, adventurous spirit! If we had found any clue to her fate, we would have followed it up until it should have led us to her, and if we could not bring her

back, we would at least have shielded her from as much evil, and surrounded her with as much good as should be in our power! Oh, how I wish we knew where to find her!" said Virginia, pausing in sad thought, while her work dropped again upon her lap, and her eyes fixed on vacancy. After a little time, resuming her work, she said, "By the way, talking of dear Magdalene! how is Theodore, Helen? Poor Theodore, how severely he felt her loss. Where is he now, Helen?"

"Yes!—*where?*" repeated Helen, sadly and gravely, "*where? Gone in search of Magdalene!*"

"Gone in search of Magdalene! He is mad! Where does he expect to find her? In what manner does he pursue his search?"

"If he is mad, as I am sometimes inclined to say myself, there is provoking 'method in his madness.' In short he got himself appointed travelling agent for the Foreign Missionary Society, and goes from city to city, and from State to State preaching, collecting, and—as far as he can do so without notoriety—looking for Magdalene! To all my persuasions—to all our parents' arguments, he replies—that let her condition be what it may, if his love and life can redeem and restore her, she shall be redeemed and restored.

"May Heaven be with him to direct and to guard him! But there is another whom Magdalene's flight has nearly maddened. Poor old Adam Hawk! I have not seen him since our return—but I am told by Bruin that a few days previous, staff in hand, and with his Nazaritish hair and beard, still unshorn, according to his vow, he left his home for—no one knows where! Nor can his object be conjectured, except by a few words uttered at parting with Bruin, when he said something wild about dogging the footsteps of a murderer—giving him rope enough to hang himself with, and then delivering him up to justice!"

"*Hush!*" said Virginia, turning pale and shuddering. "Let us talk of something else," she said, in her turn.

"Dear Ginnie, we must talk of nothing else here longer; it is growing dark, and is, besides, quite chilly this evening—these early Spring days are so deceptive. Come, let us go in. You are too delicate to brave these evening chills. I was wrong to permit you to do so. Come!" said Helen, arising and rolling up her knitting.

"I was wrong to do so, dear Helen, both upon your account and my own. Besides, father will soon be home from Heathville now, and we must have a fire in the sitting-room and tea ready for him. Dear father! how my heart fills with love and reverence at the very thought of him, Helen! What a guard and guide and support he has been to me, Helen! Had I never known my Creator and Heavenly Father, methinks the love and reverence inspired by my earthly one must still have made me wish to be good. Yet that may seem impious! Heaven forgive me if it be so, for I do not mean it. Yet I can never express half the deep and fervent affection and veneration I feel for my father! Come, Helen!" and the girls went into the house.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SITTING ROOM.

I see a small, old fashioned room,
With pannelled wainscot high;
Old portraits round in order set,
Carved heavy tables, chairs, buffet
Of dark mahogany
And there a high backed, hard settee,
On six brown legs and paws,
Flowered o'er with silk embroidery;
And there all rough with fillagree,
Tall screens on gilded claws.

Mrs. Southey.

This was the snuggery! in constant family use when there were no strangers at the hall, and here the busy hands of the two affectionate girls assisted in preparing for the evening meal and the evening fireside, and soon a clear fire was glowing in the chimney, and the shutters were closed, and "father's" dressing-gown laid over the back of his chimney corner easy chair, and his slippers laid on the hearth, and the tea-table in readiness, and the girls sitting down upon the settee upon the opposite side of the chimney, with their arms locked lovingly around each other's waists, talking in a gentle tone of their mutual subjects of interest, and waiting "father's" coming home.

This room was *home of home*—a place of such sweet security and tempting repose, that the very cat herself—the large, motherly, tortoise-shell cat—with all her maternal love and feline caution, could here marshal in her frolicsome and variegated brood of kittens, and nurse them on the sofa, or the foot cushion, or permit them to race around the room, very sure that they would not be molested, even by the great St. Bernard dog stretched at length upon the rug.

"Where did the Judge go this afternoon, Ginnie?" inquired Helen, lifting one of Madame Grimalkin's prettiest babies to her lap, and caressing it.

"Father went to the post-office, and he felt so anxious about some letters, that he decided not to wait until a messenger could go and return, but to save several hours of suspense, by being there in readiness to receive his own letters as soon as the mail should arrive and be opened."

"I read in 'The Federalist' that a foreign mail was expected to-day—does he expect to hear from Joseph Carey?"

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"Alas, no! we have not heard from Joseph for nearly a year—I do not know—" and Ginnie stopped short, for she choked with emotion, and lost her voice.

"Is that possible! I am very sorry for that," said Helen, in a tone of deepest sympathy; "but then, Virginia, the foreign mails are so uncertain, and the field of Joseph's labors so far out of the bounds of civilization, that there is much more ground to hope that his letters have miscarried, than there is for fear of his health or life!"

"I do not know," said Ginnie, with an effort at self-recovery. "I no not know! all that we have heard of Joseph proves the most enthusiastic devotion of every faculty of his soul and body to his work—his most arduous work! The very last we heard of him was through an English foreign missionary magazine that providentially fell into our hands, where his name was quite incidently introduced, and by which we learned that he was in a very distant part of Farther India quite alone and unsustained among a horde of hostile heathens. Yet not alone! 'God's heart and mind are ever with His own.'"

At this moment a heavy step was heard in the hall, the door was swung open, and Judge Washington entered the sitting-room; Virginia and Helen both arose to meet him. He shook hands with Helen, stooped and kissed Virginia's brow, and then the two, with solicitous attention, hastened to make him comfortable.

Helen went for the boot jack, while Ginnie helped him off with his great coat, and settled him in his dressing gown in the easy chair.

And then Ginnie carried off the great coat, hat and stick to hang them in the hall, while Helen, now returned, rang for tea.

Though the house was full of servants, the girls were always happy in proving their affectionate respect by performing, with their own hands, these little personal favors.

Tea was soon served, and the Judge, somewhat rested and refreshed already, arose, and with his usual amenity of manner, handed Virginia to her place at the table, and they all sat down.

After tea was over, and the cloth was removed, when they had gathered around the fire again, and the little round table, with the bright lamp, was drawn up between them, and Virginia had taken out her embroidery, and Helen her knitting, Ginnie "opened 'her' mouth and spake, saying,"

"Dear grandfather, you look happy this evening! The mail has not disappointed you! You have letters and good news!"

"Yes, Virginia, much news, strange news and good!"

"Of Magdalene?"

"No, my dear, not of *her*. Go, look in the pocket of my great coat, Virginia, and bring the packet of letters and papers that you will find there."

Virginia hastened to obey, and returned with a large bundle of papers. The Judge received them, spread them out before him on the table, and while Helen and Virginia watched him anxiously, he selected one from the number, saying,

"Now, my dears, I chose to say nothing of this letter until after tea, for I knew with this letter to digest there would be no appetite for supper!"

"Though with the supper to digest we are starving for the contents of the letter!" said Ginnie, with something of her old vivacity, for with eyes as bright as stars she had already recognized the dear, familiar hand writing.

"I see that you have discovered this letter to be from Joseph. It is. I will read it," and unfolding the epistle, Judge Washington read it to eager hearers.

The letter proved that the surmise of Helen Hervey had been correct. Joseph had written regularly every month, though being in a distant part of India, he had frequently been compelled to entrust his letters for transportation to the nearest missionary station to unknown and perhaps unfaithful messengers. He more than half suspected, he said, that all his letters sent from that quarter had failed to reach their destination. He had, through almost unparalelled toils, privations and hardships; and over nearly invincible obstacles; alone and unaided—succeeded in planting in that social desert, a vineyard of the Lord, a little Christian Church, which owned him for its pastor, a little school which had him for its teacher. Every faculty of his soul and body was busily and happily engaged. His health was not quite so strong as it had been, but that was doubtless owing to the change of climate. He would get acclimated, and then he should be better. This letter closed with fervent expressions of undying love to those dear friends he left behind, and unshaken faith in the God who would watch over and finally reunite them. Helen's and Virginia's eyes were full of grateful tears.

Virginia's hands were clasped as if in prayer or praise, and her whole countenance and manner glowing with so much fervor and earnestness of emotion, that the Judge remarked it, and she answered truly,

"Oh! father! my heart glows and dilates with I know not how much mingled admiration, joy and *regret*. Oh, father!" and Ginnie pressed both hands tightly upon her bosom as though to still its throbbing—she could say no more. To Helen *alone*, or to her father *alone* she could have spoken freely, but a new and nameless

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scruple—a vague feeling that she did not understand, prevented her from speaking to them *together*, the thoughts that were burning in her heart;—made it impossible for her to say that which so strongly, so ardently she felt: "He is there *alone*, *alone*. Oh! *why*, when I wish to go so much, when I could be such an aid and comfort to him, when I love him so, and he needs me so!—*why* may I not go to him? Oh! to be there where I am so much wanted! To be there in Joseph's lonely home! To be there alone with him! With nothing to care for but him! With nothing to do but to help him! To enter heart and soul into all his labors and desires and enterprises! To labor with Joseph and for humanity and God! With mutual affection on earth and heaven in view! What a happiness! what a happiness! Oh! that it might be mine! To be able to conceive of this, and not to be able to realize it! Joseph! Joseph! sea and land! waves and mountains! separate us not so far as fate! Joseph! my dear brother Joseph!" This was the inarticulate cry in her heart that choked her utterance, that suffused her face with blushes and her eyes with tears, as the gaze of her grandfather fell upon her.

But soon the sight of her grandfather's venerable and saddened countenance, and his silver hair, and bowed form, roused something like remorseful tenderness in Ginnie. She wiped away her tears, and smiled, and kissed his hands, and, starting up, ran and brought his pipe and tobacco, filled and lighted and handed it to him, and sat down on a cushion by his side, folded her hands upon his knee, and looking up in his face with eyes full of veneration and love, watched him.

They were sitting thus when the quick trampling of horses, followed by steps upon the portico, and a loud ringing of the door bell announced a visitor.

"Who can it be at this late hour?" inquired Ginnie and Helen, in a breath; but, before the Judge could reply with a conjecture, a servant entered and announced that Lord Cliffe had arrived, and had been shown into the drawing-room.

"And—strange that he should have come so late—is there a fire in the room?"

"No, sir."

"Show him in *here*, then;—if you have no objection to receiving him in our family sanctum, young ladies," said the Judge, addressing the first clause of his speech to the man, and the last to the girls.

"Certainly not, father. Let him come in here while I go and order supper, for I dare say he has not supped."

"Do, my dear, but do not be long, Virginia. Give your directions, and leave their fulfilment to Polly—or rather to Coral—and come yourself back here to welcome your Cousin Clinton."

Virginia left the room, and the Judge, turning to the man, directed him to show in Lord Cliffe.

Judge Washington and Miss Hervey arose to receive Lord Cliffe as he entered their snuggery, bowing with his customary courtly grace. He shook hands with the Judge, and gallantly raised the slender fingers of Helen to his lips, and assumed the seat on the sofa by her side. He informed his host in explanation of his late arrival, that business had detained him at the Seat of Government a day longer than he had expected—that being determined to keep his appointment for the first of April, he had set out from Washington City at three o'clock that morning, and had ridden all day.

The Judge was in the midst of some expressions of concern for his fatigue, when the door opened and Virginia entered.

It was not with the least remnant of weariness or even of his habitual and dignified nonchalance that Lord Cliffe sprang up, and, with very unaristocratic vivacity, hastened to meet Virginia, and, with the privilege of a cousin or a *fiancé*, drew her trembling to his bosom, and pressed a kiss upon her blushing cheek; then he led her to the settee, seated her, placed himself at her side, and, for awhile, gave up his whole attention to *her*. He declined the proffered refreshments, saying that he had supped at St. Leonard's, where he had stopped to change his dress and to rest his horses. He yielded a ready acquiescence, however, to the advice of his host, that he should retire to rest early—in consideration of having ridden something like a hundred miles, and in accordance with this proposition, the family circle separated.

Lord Cliffe, in bidding good night to the Judge, requested to be informed at what hour of the next day it would be convenient to favor him with a private interview. Judge Washington expressed his readiness to receive Lord Cliffe in his library immediately after breakfast. This little conversation passed in a low voice at the foot of the great staircase, where the host and his guest parted for the night.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE MAIDEN'S HEART.

Her bosom is the soft retreat
For love, and love alone;
And yet her heart has never beat
To love's delicious tone.
It dwells within its circle free
From tender thoughts like these
Waiting the little deity
As blossoms wait the breeze,
Before it throws its leaves apart,
And trembles like the love-touched heart.

Amelia B. Welby.

After breakfast the next morning, while Helen was in her chamber, and the little housewife, Virginia, was giving orders for dinner, Lord Cliffe sought Judge Washington in his library.

His unexpected meeting with Magdalene in the United States,—her threat—had had one effect upon him—not that of alarming him for his personal safety, but of disturbing his sense of security in Judge Washington's high esteem, and in Virginia's pure affections. He wished, therefore, to insure his position by a speedy marriage, or by the speedy removal of Virginia far from the neighborhood of Magdalene. It was with this intention that he entered the library of Judge Washington. The old gentleman sat before the fire in a large, red, easy chair beside a table covered with green cloth, and scattered over with books, papers, writing materials, etc. On the opposite side of the table, stood an empty chair similar to his own. He arose and received Lord Cliffe with much urbanity, pointing to the vacant seat, which the latter took.—With an air of stately, yet graceful deprecation, Lord Cliffe apologized for again, so soon, opening the subject recently closed between them at Richmond, and entreated permission to renew and press his suit, for urgent reasons, which he begged leave to explain.

Judge Washington looked sad and grave, but bowed and requested him to proceed.

Lord Cliffe then informed him that business of vital importance would call him to England immediately, and detain him there for many months—that the thought of leaving his promised bride, in whom his whole life was bound up, was painful beyond sufferance; that her affections and confidence already half won, might be entirely lost again during his protracted absence; and finally—both as a favor and a right, he entreated Judge Washington's consent, and claimed his promise of permission to speak to Virginia of his love, and to ask her hand.

The old gentleman leaned his head upon his hand, and remained in silent thought for the space of a few minutes, while Lord Cliffe uneasily awaited his answer. At last he said in a serious tone—"I am old, I know and feel; and life and health is precarious in its duration. If I die, leaving my grand-daughter unmarried, she will be unprotected. I have, perhaps, put off this matter long enough. Virginia is nineteen years of age. Yet if I have delayed the consummation of your betrothal, Lord Cliffe, it has been as you know, from no disinclination to fulfill my promise and Colonel Carey's wishes. It has been from the deepest interest in Virginia's happiness, and in yours as connected with hers. I wished you to secure *the first place* in her affections before you should obtain her hand." There was an emphasis in the latter clause of this speech, that caused Lord Cliffe to look up in great anxiety, with difficulty restrained; Judge Washington continued—"Virginia has a warm regard for you, Clinton, but she does not love you as I could wish her to love her husband—as *you*, if you wed for happiness, should wish your wife to love you."

"You more than intimate that I am not so blessed as to hold the highest place in Miss Washington's regard—is *another*—besides yourself—so favored?"

"*Yes*—more than you—more than myself, more, far more than any one else on earth, Virginia loves her adopted brother, Joseph Carey! Lord Cliffe arose and slowly and thoughtfully paced up and down the floor. Returning, he resumed his seat, and looked inquiringly in the face of Judge Washington, who, in reply to the sad and silent interrogative, said—"Do not be alarmed, or the least uneasy at this annunciation. I spoke of it, in order to anticipate and prevent any needless misconstruction and anxiety. Virginia esteems and loves Joseph Carey beyond and above all others—but it is the esteem of a pure heart, for a noble one—the devoted love of an only sister for an only brother—for such from babyhood has been their relation. She loves *you* in the same manner, but in a less degree. That greatest, strongest, warmest love—that one predominant love, has never been inspired in Virginia's heart."

Lord Cliffe's countenance cleared as he said—"Be of good cheer, sir, far from cherishing a morose uneasiness at this circumstance, I understand it—and recall the beautiful lines of our greatest poet,

"'Oh! she that hath a heart of that fine frame
To pay this debt of love but to a brother,
How will she love, when the rich golden shaft
Hath killed the flock of all affections else
That live in her?'

I only await your permission to address Virginia."

"You have it, then, Clinton; and may Heaven speed your wooing and bless your love, as you deserve!"

"I shall have the honor of your *wishes* on my

side; shall I also have the influence of your *word* with Virginia?"

"Assuredly, Clinton, so far as the expression of my earnest desire—leaving her then free to act, will go—you shall have the weight of my interest with my child."

So ended the interview.

Lord Cliffe bowed, and withdrew from the library, and Judge Washington, pulling the bell-rope, summoned a servant, whom he dispatched with a message to Virginia. Ginnie obeyed the call instantly, by coming into the presence of her grandfather just as she was—just as she happened to be dressed—when the messenger met her half-way between the "meat-house" and the kitchen, with her gingham sun-bonnet, and sheepskin mittens, and her morning apron, and little basket of keys.

"Come here, my child," said her grandfather, holding out his hand; and as she advanced, he drew her towards him, looking with fond and grave affection upon her face, as he removed her bonnet, took her little basket from her, set it away, placed her in a chair by his side, and again taking her hand, said, very seriously,—"Virginia, how do you like your cousin, Lord Cliffe?"

"At first, father, I did not like him, but of late, since I have known him so much better, I have liked him more and more every day."

"That is well—*very well*. May your regard for him continue to increase—Virginia! your grandfather is an old man."

"My *dear* father!"

"He cannot expect to live many years—he *may* not live many months. Virginia!"

"Dear father!"

"If he should die, you would be left quite unprotected—exposed to all the snares and dangers that beset the path of a young, beautiful, and wealthy orphan. Do not weep, Virginia, but hear me. That thought, Virginia!—that thought of leaving you so unsheltered and defenceless, saddens my life!—it would darken my death!" He paused, and looked at her. She wiped her eyes, and replied—

"Do not let it, then, dearest father. Your child is young and inexperienced, but she is not silly, or vain, or cowardly. In the event of God, in His infinite wisdom, visiting me with such an affliction as your loss, dearest father, I will tell you what I will do, so that you shall not have one fear for me!"

"Well, Virginia?"

"If the Lord would strengthen me to bear the trial—the first thing I should do would be to write to Joseph to come over for me, and the next thing would be to go to Mr. Hervey's, and put myself under the protection of the family until he should arrive."

"And—*then*, Virginia?" inquired the Judge, in evident anxiety.

"And, then—why, then—then—*what Joseph pleased!*" she said, twisting up the corner of her apron, while her brow crimsoned.

Both were silent, until a profound sigh from Judge Washington, caused Virginia to look up, and say—

"Dear father, you are sighing—what for?—can I do anything for you?"

"Yes, Virginia!"

"What is it, dear father? Tell me."

"Will you do it, Virginia?"

"*Will I—will I do what my father wishes?* Oh, father! when did 'Ginnie' ever do otherwise?"

"Promise me, Virginia, to do what I wish."

"I promise, dear father!—*of course I do!*—though no promises can bind me any faster than duty does now!"

"Virginia! by following my advice in an affair of which I am about to speak to you, you will lighten my latter days of their great burden of anxiety!"

"Oh, speak! and tell me what it is, dear father! *Of course I will do it!* Can any one doubt it?"

"Listen, then, Virginia—I wish to see you married before I die!" said he, looking at her with earnest affection. To his surprise, her face at first lighted up with an impulsive joy, but then a sudden bashfulness flushed her brow, and she dropped her eyes upon the carpet. "Can you surmise who it is that I have selected as your husband, Virginia?" Again the smile and the blush, the pleasure and the bashfulness, conflicted in the maiden's bosom, and on her downcast countenance. "Speak, Virginia! Tell me if you know the name of him who prefers you before all women, and upon whom before all men I prefer to bestow the hand of my child? Ah, do you know his name, Virginia?" said he, and he stooped to catch the scarcely audible sound made by the smiling lips—and he heard her murmur in a love-tuned voice—

"Joseph Carey."

Judge Washington drew back, changed countenance, and sighed more heavily than before as he said—

"No, my dear! No, Virginia!—I never thought of him in that light! Never *could* think of him in that light! He is a most estimable young man, but he is your brother! Let him ever remain so! Sisters do not marry with their brothers. No, Virginia! No! decidedly not him! You must not dream of such a thing! What ever could have put it into your head? Did Joseph ever hint such a proposition to you?"

"No, sir, never," said Ginnie, in a low, trembling tone, with her crimson brow between t[illegible]

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drooping ringlets, still bent—"never—but when *you* talked with such approval of one whom you preferred before all others, I thought, of course, dear father, that you meant him who *merited* such preference above all others—my dear brother Joseph!—that was all!—forgive me!" and Ginnie twirled her apron quite up to the belt.

"Virginia, darling, you do not inquire whom I *do* mean!"

"Because, dear father, I do not much care, since it is not Joseph. Alas! pardon me—I know not what I am saying! I did not mean to answer you so, father. Tell me, then, sir, whom—" she paused and trembled.

"A most proper match for you, my dear child, in every respect. Your Cousin Clinton—Lord Cliffe!"

Virginia's color faded, and she remained silent.

"What have you to say to it, my dear child?"

"Nothing but *this*—that I had hoped to spend all my life among my childhood's friends, and in my childhood's home—to live and die with you, and Magdalene, and Joseph,—at Prospect Plains!"

"That is a favor few young people have, and fewer still desire from fate! 'The young bird must leave its nest,' Virginia! Come, my dear! You will give peace to your old father, by complying with his wishes. You will listen favorbly to Lord Cliffe's suit?"

"I gave you my promise! Yes, father!" and Virginia burst into tears. He let her weep, unchidden. And then he drew her to his bosom, kisssed her, and sent her away to change her dress. Virginia met Lord Cliffe at dinner, and the conscious blood mounted to her brow. All day she avoided him as much as she could without unkindness. And in their few chance meetings, her face flushed and paled, her limbs trembled, and her voice faltered—so deadly was her fear of the private interview she had promised. And how much this dread resembled the bashfulness of virgin love; and how nearly it had deceived even her lover.

Late in the afternoon, when the sun was shining through the crimson curtains of the wainscoted parlor, and falling redly on the sofa, underneath the window, where they sat, Lord Cliffe found the opportunity of declaring his love, and pressing his suit with all the eloquence of passion and of genius, that she should bless him with the promise of her hand. At last she gave him this promise—only pleading that no more should be said of it until their return from their European tour.

And finally rising, she begged the privilege of retiring to her room for re-composure.

Lord Cliffe arose, and with his usual suave deferential gallantry, took her hand and led her to the door, opening, and holding it open, until she had passed.

And Virginia went to her chamber.

She had obeyed her father. She thought she had done her duty. Yet her heart was full of trouble—tender, remorseful memories of Joseph, and his love, and his loneliness—and a compunctious sense of injustice to Lord Cliffe, and abuse of his confiding faith.

Full of distress, she dropped upon her knees by the side of her bed—buried her head in its downy softness—wept, and prayed that God would bless, would highly bless her brother Joseph, and give to *her* clear sight to see her duty, and strong heart to do it.

She arose with one thing clear in her mind—that in a vital matter like this she must have no concealments from Lord Cliffe. No! painful as it would be, she must unveil her heart to him. He was in the wainscoted parlor yet—she would go to him now, while she had a little strength and courage.

Without stopping to arrange her disordered dress, or smooth her dishevelled hair—without thinking of them at all, she quickly glided down the stairs, and softly opened the parlor door. She paused in fear, and looked in

He was there yet, sitting upon the sofa, under the crimson light of the window, gazing fixedly upon a miniature he held in his hand, and his attitude was full of strange distress. Against the bright light she could not see his face, but she thought with affectionate compunction—"He *too* has his sorrows—*what* sorrows can he have? Have *all* sorrows then? And can I add to the sum of his, the cruellest one of a false, deceiving bride? No, my profound soul! Notwithstanding all my failing and faltering, I will go in and tell him."

And all this while he was gazing on the miniature—his hand passing to and fro in a troubled gesture across his brow. Virginia, closing the door behind her, approached him trembling. He looked up, and perceiving her, arose, and tenderly and respectfully taking her hand, led her to the sofa, seated her, and took his place at her side, before he deliberately shut the locket containing the miniature, and returned it to his bosom. Then he gave his whole attention to her. She was blushing deeply, and the tears were sparkling on her eyelashes as she said, in a low, tremulous voice, and with an averted face,

"I have something to say to you, Lord Cliffe, which it is right that I should say—but it is very painful to me to say it."

She paused, and her brow flushed.

"The sun-light is too bright in here—it is blinding," said Lord Cliffe, and he arose, turned, closed the blinds, let down the crimson curtains, reseated himself beside Virginia, and gently

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passing one hand around her waist, and laying her face against his bosom, he bent over her, and tenderly stroking back the damp, pale hair from her paler brow, he said, in a soothing voice, "Say on, now, Virginia! There is nothing in that innocent heart of thine, that may not fearlessly be spoken. Say on, my love. Murmur in ever such a low whisper, and I shall catch or guess your meaning."

And with her face hidden on his bosom, where he held her, she began to speak in a tone as low, as mellifluous, and nearly as inarticulate as the shiver of distant forest leaves:

"You ought to know before you marry me, that I love my brother Joseph better than any one else in the wide world—that—if father had been willing—and Joseph had been willing—I had rather passed my whole life with him than with any one else on earth—that I had rather shared his home, however humble, or his fate, however hard—as his wife, or as his sister, I did not care which,—which ever Joseph pleased—than to live in the most splendid palace, and share the most brilliant destiny on earth! I cannot feel in my heart that it is wrong to love Joseph! I feel as if it would be wrong *not* to love him, even if I could help it! But I cannot. I feel that I shall always love my dear brother more than any one else in the world. But I feel that you should know this, and I fear that it is not right for me to marry—only that my father—who knows all about it, who is both wise and good, and who, above all, has the disposal of my destiny—gives me to you! There, my lord! I have unveiled to you the holiest sanctuary of my heart! I am yours by my father's gift, and by my own promise. Do with me as you please—reject or receive me!" and she moved as though to withdraw herself from his embrace, but he gathered her closer to his bosom, bent over her, parted the golden ringlets each side, pressed his lips to her pure forehead, and said, in tones as low and musical as flute notes,

"I will not take you—no! much as my heart is set upon you, I will not take you as any one's gift but your own, my Virginia! But! do you not like me a little then?"

"Oh! very much, very much I like you—*as my cousin*—and very much *more*, because I was so unjust to you once. But see! when I feel most impressed and inspired by your nobleness and gentleness, by all your goodness—*then* I most want to see Joseph! I want to say to him how much I esteem you—because, you see no emotion, however happy, and no thought, however bright, is perfect without Joseph's sympathy. But, oh! Lord Cliffe! much as I esteem you—indeed—" She burst into tears, and hid her face in *his* bosom, as though it had been her father's.

He let her weep freely, caressing her gently, tenderly, all the while; and when she had recovered herself, he said, in a soft whisper,

"You shall not be called to fulfill your engagement, dear one, until I have won your heart. Without loving Joseph less, you shall love me much more—with a perfect love of which you have never dreamed yet. Now tell me of your brother Joseph. Tell me freely about your childhood and youth. I also feel that I shall love Joseph for his sweet sister's sake. And when I have won her love, and won her hand, her brother's welfare shall be my first care."

Thus he obtained her confidence.

"You are so good! so good!" said she, pressing his hand; "so good—may Heaven bless you as you merit."

After a little time, with a strange, sad smile, he said,

"Virginia! you saw me place a miniature in my bosom."

"Yes, Clinton."

"I, too, have a sister of the heart. That was the portrait of one whom I *once* loved passionately—whom I *now* love purely; and whom I must continue to love through life."

Virginia gazed at him earnestly, anxiously, feeling now a strange, deep sympathy for him, such as she had never felt before. She expected him to tell her the name, and show her the portrait of this "one," but he did not—only with a deep sigh, he said, earnestly,

"Virginia! if ever in after life this sister of mine crosses your path, or gives you uneasiness, think of your brother, and forgive me! And yet, my pure angel, how different! Go, now, dear Virginia! I, in my turn, need solitude for re-composure;" and so he dismissed her.

The next morning, in a conversation between Lord Cliffe and Judge Washington, it was arranged that the voyage of the family should be hastened, in order that the former, whose business required his speedy departure, should accompany them. It was also agreed, that the whole party should go first to England, and remain for the few weeks it would take to settle Lord Cliffe's affairs, and then that he should accompany them on their continental tour, and that the marriage should take place on their return to Virginia.

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CHAPTER X.

THE SISTER'S HEART.

Only, be sure thy daily life
In its peace and in its strife,
Never shall be unobserved;
We pursue thy whole career,
And hope for it, or doubt, or fear,—
So thou hast kept thy path or swerved,
We are beside thee in all thy ways,
With our blame, with our praise,
Our shame to feel, our pride to show,
Glad, sorry,—but indifferent, no!

Browning.

By tacit consent never had Magdalene's name been mentioned in the family since the last conversation about her between Helen and Virginia—in the presence of Lord Cliffe, or of any other one not known as an intimate friend of hers, it had never been mentioned at all. But as the day approached upon which they were to leave home and country for a distant voyage and a long absence, Virginia felt about her heart the constraint of those sister ties she had never been able or willing to unloose. She could not depart without leaving some fresh evidence of her continued love for Magdalene. But how? Magdalene was lost. Yes—but Theodore Hervey was gone to seek her. Therefore, Virginia determined to write a letter to Magdalene, and send it to the elder Mr. Hervey to be transmitted to Theodore, to be delivered to Magdalene, when she should be found. Virginia wrote this letter, eloquent with the most earnest and anxious affection—entreating her sister to inform her of her place of residence, so that she might hasten to see her as soon as she should return home; or if it suited her convenience to do so, at any time during their absence to return to the hall, where the housekeeper, Polly Pepper, had standing orders to keep her rooms in readiness for her reception, assuring her with the most loving faith that herself and her father trusted her through all things; that if she would come home, *only* come home, she should be welcomed with the most joyful affection; that her confidence should not be obtruded upon; that only so much as she would volunteer to communicate should be heard of the past three year's history—telling her that ever when she knelt down at her own private devotions, she prayed first and most for her bosom's sister; that when the household gathered in family prayer, morning and evening, they prayed for their lost daughter, that God would watch over her, and guard and guide her, and restore her safely to their love. The first and last words were—"Come"—"Come home."

This letter she folded, sealed, directed, and gave to Lord Cliffe, with a request that he would despatch it by a messenger to the Old Forest Parsonage. Lord Cliffe read the superscription with ill restrained agitation.

"'Magdalene Mountjoy—care of Rev. Theo. Hervey,' does he—where—?" and there he paused. Virginia took his hand, drew him to the distant sofa against the window, and sitting down with her head resting against his shoulder, told, amid many tears, the story of Magdalene's disappearance, of which, of course, he knew far more than any one else. It was well that she sat a little back of him with her face leaned forward downwards on his shoulder, so that she could not see the white storm in his face. It was in a very low, deep, steady voice, that finally he asked,

"This young minister—this Theodore Hervey—was the dark picturesque personage I met here the first winter of my arrival?"

"Yes."

"And he knows the place of Magdalene's abode?" he farther inquired, without turning his head toward Virginia.

"No, he does not—only you see this is it: He loved Magdalene, and offered to marry her. Magdalene had a great esteem for him, but refused him. When she was missing, he took it to heart very deeply. He has pledged his life to find and restore her—that is it. I entrust my letter to him as the most probable means of getting it to her. Oh! that she may be discovered and restored to us! Oh! you see I could not leave the country without leaving our home open for the reception of my sister, and without writing and entreating her by my love, by all our love, to come and dwell in it! There! you may read the letter if you will, Clinton, I have no secrets from you."

"No. But—does your grandfather approve this invitation under the circumstances — the *strange* circumstances?" asked Lord Cliffe, somewhat abruptly, and still with averted face.

"My dear venerable father will open his arms for his other daughter whenever she will turn and lay her wild head on his good bosom for rest! Oh! you do not know my dear, dear father! It would take you all your life to learn how good he is! There is only one more among those I know in the world who is as good as he is—the boy of his own rearing—Joseph!"

"What do you think—that Magdalene will return?"

"I do not know—but what I hope is that Magdalene will return, and that Theodore, who deserves her, if ever man deserved woman, will win her love and her hand. WHAT'S THE MATTER!"

This sudden terrified question was put by Virginia, as Lord Cliffe starting, threw off her hand and strode up and down the floor in strong agitation. When he recovered his composure and came and sat by her side, and she anxiously repeated her question—he replied,

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"A pain! a pain, Virginia! Ginnie, dearest, did you love your brother very much?"

The next morning, the whole party, consisting of Judge Washington, Lord Cliffe, Virginia, and Helen Hervey, set out in the old family carriage, for Norfolk, which they reached, by easy stages, in a few days. Then sending the carriage back by the coachman to the hall, they embarked aboard the good ship Xyphias, Captain Harper, and sailed for Liverpool, where they arrived after a tedious passage of two months. They proceeded at once to London, and put up at handsome lodgings, intending to remain in the city while the business that brought Lord Cliffe to England was pending. While here, they went out every day, attended, as often as he could leave his business, by Lord Cliffe, as cicerone—to see all that was remarkable or wonderful in the city, or the surrounding country. Among other places visited—not because it was wonderful, or even remarkable, but only because it was an object of interest, as the prospective home of his daughter—was Castle Cliffe, the seat of Lord Cliffe, in Hertfordshire—in which, at the invitation of its master, Judge Washington, with his party, passed a week very pleasantly. When the affairs of Lord Cliffe were finally settled, they set out for Scotland—visited all the places made classic ground—yes! *holy* ground—by the "great magician of the North," and visited the Highlands, passing over to the Orkney and the Shetland Isles. Here the temptation to cross to Denmark and Sweden, the great Norse country, was so powerful as scarcely to be resisted—but unprepared for this tour, they returned to Scotland, and journeyed Southward and Westward towards Wales—where they spent some weeks among the wild and beautiful scenery. Next they visited Ireland, where they spent the early weeks of Autumn. Finally, they returned to London to make some arrangements previous to crossing the channel to France, and spending the Winter in Paris.

It was at the period of their return to London, that a shock met them—a shock of astonishment to all—of rapture to *one*. A Book had burst upon the startled minds of men, like a new Revelation—a book from the depths of Asia, written by a young missionary, whose name was already the synonyme of courage and self-devotion, but nothing more—and yet a book that had shaken to its centre the triple kingdom of Letters, Church and State, that had set opposite parties of the Literati, the Politicians and Christians at war—a book upon which, as upon the first production of every great original thinker, unmeasured praise and blame had been bestowed—yet a book full of Divine Light and Christian Love. Its title, The Harmony of the Creeds, by the Reverend Joseph Carey, Missionary to Changduagn, Tonquin, Farther India.

You know before I tell you, that Virginia possessed herself of a copy of this book before eating or sleeping. Yes! you do not wish me to say that she went away with it to her room—that she kissed and hugged the senseless volume, and loved it, and talked to it as if it had been a living thing—that lying on her sofa, she pored over its contents with one hand supporting her glowing cheek, down which the bright golden ringlets flashed, and the other, holding the book upon the page of which her gaze was rivetted. I need not tell you that this very book first awakened Virginia's higher intellect, and engaged her in subjects of general interest to the human race, until now deemed beyond and above her comprehension—that she who sat down to its perusal, only a loving girl, arose from its reading a thinking woman—so suddenly is the mind sometimes aroused from a deep sleep, and quickened to an endless life and growth.

They went to France, and spent the Winter in Paris.

They passed the Spring and Summer in making the tour of Europe, and early in the Autumn they returned to England, preparatory to sailing for home. And everywhere they heard the name of Joseph Carey spoken of with deep veneration by the young, with high approbation by the old. He had seemed almost to have conquered the first tempest of opposition that had assailed him. Joseph Carey, the Missionary, the Christian Politician, the Philosopher, the Philanthropist,—was the admiration, the enthusiasm of the day. His works on Paganism, Judaism, and Mohammedanism—written before the first was published, and already translated into almost every language of Europe, were everywhere read.

Virginia's heart bounded for joy—and her eyes flashed with affectionate triumph, as she raised them to the countenance of Lord Cliffe, who watched her, and thought as she remembered his stately condescension in promising to befriend Joseph—"*You* patronize Joseph Carey? that star-bright one? the welfare of Joseph Carey be *your* care! Why, it was the special care of God!" And, oh! her soul within her sang for joy and triumph, to think that Joseph, the nameless, penniless, friendless outcast! the street pauper! the poor foundling boy! dependant on a child's pity for his life—dependant upon an old man's charity for his nurture and education—yes! dependant on them for his very name—a name that he had made illustrious! that this Joseph had turned out to be—not the lost heir to some immense estate, stolen at his birth, or changed in his cradle—oh, no! for any light thrown upon his birth and parentage, he was the pauper foundling *still!* but God's own child! God's chosen child, crowned with the triple crown

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of goodness, genius and beauty! anointed to toil and suffer! endowed to achieve and triumph! Oh, yes! the sister's heart sang for joy, and the burden of its glee was

"Io! pæan!
Joseph! Joseph!"

In truth, Lord Cliffe made small progress in her heart; very little had he advanced beyond the point at which he stood a year before, when she had given him her quiet, steady, cousinly affection and confidence. Far enough was Virginia from that "one undreamed-of love," which should surmount without destroying all other loves—and which Lord Cliffe had hoped and expected to inspire in her heart.

In this posture of affairs they returned to the United States. They landed at Norfolk, and proceeded immediately to Richmond, where they arrived on a Saturday night near Christmas. On Sunday morning they went to the Episcopal Church, and heard an excellent sermon from the stationed minister, Doctor Goodwin. A sermon was announced for the evening, at seven o'clock. In the evening Judge Washington and his party went. Though the church was large, it was crowded to excess, so that our party, who came late, were obliged to take a pew in the lower end of the building near the door. They entered and sat down—the Judge, Helen, Lord Cliffe, and Virginia, in the order I have named them—Ginnie at the head of the pew. Yet what was this? What strange, pleasing, painful influence was this? What new experience? Was the air highly charged with electricity? No sooner was Virginia seated, than her nerves thrilled, and her heart thrilled with a new, strange, half-pleasurable, half-painful emotion! The minister arose to give out the hymn—the words of which she had always admired with enthusiasm, and which now kindled her heart to its old fervor! Yet this did in no measure account for the strange, new sensation of mingled trouble and delight, that agitated her bosom, when burst from the full choir, the inspiring music and words of the hackneyed but beautiful hymn—

"From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand,
Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain."

What *was* there in this music and this poetry that had inspired her a score of times before, but that *now* nearly overwhelmed her with the force of a new, strange, and fearful experience, that sent the blood pouring into her heart, while an icy coldness spread like a garment over her? What was there in the cadences of this music, that made every separate note seem a separate, sentient, conscious being, appealing to her soul? filling it with a mingled ecstasy and anguish, that in its fearful excess, nearly destroyed her. The hymn was finished, and she sank down in the corner of the pew overwhelmed.

Dr. Goodwin arose, and gave out the text—"Go preach the Gospel to every nation."—The subject of his sermon—Foreign Missions. In spite of the strange excitement of her nerves—or, indeed, as if the master influence over her had changed its mode, and now exercised a calming power, she grew serene, and then in a strange, sweet quiet, she sat until she became profoundly interested in this sermon, as heretofore she had been in every subject that nearly or remotely concerned the mission and the life of Joseph Carey.

Yet at the conclusion of the sermon, when the last hymn arose in a swelling volume of harmony—again she paled and flushed with that strange, thrilling, ague shake, and fever glow—and again at its conclusion, she sank half fainting back in her seat, in the dark corner of the pew. When the hymn was concluded, and before the benediction was pronounced, Dr. Goodwin, turning to a gentleman who sat obscure in the back seat of the pulpit, invited him to approach, and as he arose and advanced to the front of the pulpit, presented him to the congregation with these words—

"My dear brethren and friends, I have especial joy this evening, in introducing to your acquaintance, one whose name has long been dear as familiar to every christian heart—the Rev. Joseph Carey, late Missionary to Chang duagn, Tonquin."

A slight murmur of surprise and pleasure ran through the congregation—it subsided—and then in a few pointed words full of truth, nature, and christian affection, Mr. Carey expressed the joy he felt in once more greeting his countrymen and fellow christians, and sat down.

Then Dr. Goodwin announced that his esteemed brother would lecture at that church on the next Wednesday evening—the subject of the lecture being the Christian Missions in Farther India.

Then the minister spread forth his hands, and the congregation arose and bowed their heads to receive the benediction. That over, the congregation began to move—some to depart, and some to crowd up near the altar to welcome the returned missionary, who, with the minister, was descending from the pulpit. Judge Washington bending down the pew towards Virginia, said,

"My child, come! We must go and welcome Joseph!"

But Virginia, very pale, said,

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"Not now! wait! wait till the crowd has thinned! Stay here! he will not leave the church till all the congregation are gone, and then he must pass down this way! stay, do, dear sir, indulge me!"

And they sat still, watching the congratulating crowd that surrounded the missionary, whose head could just be seen above them. At last they began to disperse and passed down the aisles.

When all had left the church, with the exception of the minister, the missionary, and one or two old members of the vestry, who were also intimate acquaintances of the Judge, the latter signed to his party, and leaving the pew, drew Helen Hervey's arm within his own, and followed by Lord Cliffe, conducting Virginia, passed up the middle aisle towards the front of the altar, where Joseph still stood, conversing with Dr. Goodwin, Governor Mountjoy, and another distinguished gentleman. Joseph Carey stood there under the full, clear, bright light of the altar chandeliers. But Virginia! she was a little in the rear, leaning heavily upon the arm of Lord Cliffe.

She saw Joseph Carey, as he stood in the full light, between the venerable minister Doctor Goodwin, and the equally venerable Governor Mountjoy—*to her eyes*—a prince of Heaven's own crowning—with his court around him. His tall and stately form was draped by the rich furred Spanish cloak that hung from his shoulders with the classic grace of the Roman toga, and the regal dignity of the ermined purple; his broad, white, glorious brow—around which the fair golden hair, shining like a sun ray, might have seemed a halo, or a crown—combined and harmonized the celestial beauty of an angel's forehead with the royal majesty of a king's front—how elevated, how exalted—how gloriously transformed—yes!—how divinely transfigured he seemed to her!

But then a rush of blood to the brain must have dazzled Virginia's vision, so that fire flashed before her eyes, and she saw stars, and crowns, and haloes where none were to be seen.

Yet I wish I could place this missionary before you as he stood there, and electrify your hearts with the impression he really made.

In truth a great change had passed over Joseph Carey. He was no longer the delicate, though beautiful boy, shuddering and torn by passion, as the sapling is shaken and uprooted by the whirlwind—faint and pale with passion, as the sapling beaten down and blanched in the tempest and the flood.

No!—but the mature, self-possessed, self-governed, regnant man. A very handsome, portly man, of very noble presence, constraining a high respect and deference even from those veteran dignitaries of church and state around him.

As soon as he raised his eyes, and saw Judge Washington and his party approaching, a smile of surprise and pleasure lighted up his countenance, and stepping forth, he held out his hand to greet him. They shook hands warmly, warmly expressing the joy they felt at this unexpected meeting. Had they followed the impulses of their hearts they would have embraced, but ours is a cold-mannered, if not a cold-hearted nation. He shook hands with Helen Hervey next, and then the Judge, stepping on one side, revealed to his view Virginia, leaning on the arm of Lord Cliffe.

"Lady Cliffe!" said Joseph, advancing at once, though his brow flushed, offering his hand, and smiling upon her.

But oh! an electric shock could not have been so powerful in its effect upon her nerves as the touch of that long-lost hand—the meeting of that long-lost gaze. She wished to reply—to disabuse him of his mistake, and to welcome him home—she wished to say "No, Joseph! your sister, Ginnie Washington still, who is so happy! so happy to see you!" But she durst not, she could not—a strange bashfulness and humility never before felt in reference to her brother, blended with her affection, and prevented her speech. There was a sovereignty even in his gracious smile and softly modulated tone, that awed her into silence—that awed her into stillness—while the love-lit eyes that beamed upon hers awoke now for the first time the woman's deep, passionate nature to life! To be so full of life—new life—strong life!—and yet so still, and pale, and passive—her eyelids dropping—dropping slowly before the gentle gaze fixed upon her.

"Lady Cliffe, I presume?" said Mr. Carey, looking around, inquiringly, still holding her hand.

"No, sir! Miss Washington, *as yet*," replied Lord Cliffe, in no very benignant tone, and in no very benignant manner.

A flash of unutterable joy irradiated Joseph Carey's countenance an instant, notwithstanding the warning words—"*as yet*." His eyes fixed upon hers again, and with a gentle dominion said—*what only her profound heart heard*—then quickly turning to Lord Cliffe, he said, apologetically—

"My serious error, sir, grew out of a paragraph in an old English newspaper, which announced your *then* approaching marriage with Miss Washington.'

A pang of remorse—she scarcely knew wherefore—pierced Virginia's heart at this speech.

In reply to it Lord Cliffe bowed, stiffly.

All this passed in an instant, and then Judge Washington, coming up, begged the happiness of Joseph Carey's company next day, to dinner, in their private apartments at the Richmond Hotel. Thanking him, Joseph Carey accepted the invitation, and the party separated.

CHAPTER XI.

For there is probation to decree,
And many and long must the trials be,
Thou shalt victoriously endure
If that brow is true and those eyes are sure.
Browning.

Virginia had not spoken during the interview. She did not speak during the drive from the church to the hotel. She did not speak even when she found herself alone with Helen Hervey in the sleeping apartment occupied in common by the two girls. She seemed enwrapped in a happy trance, too happy to admit of thought, still less of speech. She retired to rest in the same unbroken silence, and all night long with closed eyes and soft smile she lived in the meaning of one poem—the happy, eloquent gaze that spoke to her heart through Joseph's eyes, when he knew that she was free. With the morning vanished the blissful vision and came the reality. She remembered her grandfather's wishes and the world's expectations—and above all, her own implied engagement to Lord Cliffe—and with these, the predominant and deathless attachment between herself and Joseph Carey. But she recalled all these irreconcilable facts without the slightest confusion of ideas, or doubt, or fear. Her head was clear, and her heart was strong, and her line of life and action drawn out brightly, clearly, harmoniously before her. She read the past with undimmed eyes now, as she read the future with undazzled ones. She understood perfectly now, the magnanimity, the self-immolation with which Joseph Carey had become an exile and a wanderer for her sake; venerated the faith, hope, and love, with which he had sought to devote that exile to the cause of God and humanity; and gloried in the courage, energy and perseverance with which he had overcome obstacles of colossal magnitude, and achieved success. And now for her own part—I repeat it—her head was clear, her heart strong, and her line of life and action drawn out clearly, brightly, harmoniously before her.

She joined the family at breakfast, wearing a fresh and joyous countenance, such as she had not worn since her sixteenth year—and all remarked it in silence, ascribing the happy change to the right cause—Joseph Carey's return—but with somewhat different sentiments. Helen Hervey with quiet sympathy, Judge Washington with uneasiness, Lord Cliffe with anxiety. When breakfast was over, and they had risen from the table, and the Judge was in the act of putting on his great-coat to go out, Virginia followed him, laid her hand softly on his arm, and said, gently,

"Father, I want to talk to you alone, somewhere; I want to open my heart to you."

He looked down at her serious though happy face, and said, with an air of some anxiety too, "When I return, dear child. I have been summoned in haste to go out on urgent business. When I return, my dear, I will hear you." And stooping and pressing a kiss upon her open brow, he buttoned up his coat, took his hat and stick, and was passing out, when at the door he was arrested by Lord Cliffe, who begged the favor of an interview with Judge Washington, if his convenience served. The Judge turned to look at him, scarcely able to repress a smile at the thought of how much he was in demand upon this especial morning. "My dear, sir," he replied, "I am called in haste to the bedside of my old friend, General Mountjoy, who is taken suddenly ill. When I come back I shall be happy to see you in your own apartment or in mine."

"Permit me to accompany you, Judge Washington, as far as the door of General Mountjoy's house. I can open my business as we walk."

"I do beseech you to excuse me, sir, I am in great haste. When I come back, I shall be at your commands," and bowing deeply, the Judge walked forth. He had not proceeded far, however, when he met Mr. Carey walking arm in arm with the Honorable J——— M———, who, though then but a rising star, was yet one of the most eminent men of his day. Bowing and excusing himself, Mr. Carey took a moment's leave of his distinguished companion, and turning with Judge Washington, he said—

"My dear sir, can you grant me the favor of an interview this morning, at your earliest convenient hour?"

"Humph! my dear Joseph, a Prime Minister or a Royal favorite, could not be more in demand than I am this morning! I have already *three* appointments. I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at dinner. After that I am at your service. Good-morning, sir!"

"Pardon me, I was on my way to your lodgings. Have I your permission to call on Miss Washington this morning?"

"Ay! go, Joseph! Good-morning."

"Good-morning, sir," replied Mr. Carey, bowing, and quickening his steps to rejoin Mr. M———.

Joseph Carey came up with his companion, and they walked together until they came in front of the Richmond Hotel, when parting, the latter walked on, and the former entered the house. He found Virginia alone in their private parlor. Lord Cliffe had left the house soon after Judge Washington. Helen Hervey was lying down with a slight indisposition.

Reader, I shall not intrude upon the reunion of these long-severed friends. Let it suffice to say that Joseph passed an hour with Virginia alone in the parlor—that then they parted until five o'clock, she remaining on the sofa in a smiling

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trance—he leaving the house with a happy air and regnant step. *Observe:* A few paces from the door he met Judge Washington coming home; he bowed, smilingly renewed his promise to dine with the Judge, and went on. A little farther on he encountered Lord Cliffe returning. The gentlemen silently touched their hats in passing—that was all—*except:* Lord Cliffe quickened his steps and overtook the Judge just as he had reached the hotel, and they entered the house together. Judge Washington expressed his readiness to receive Lord Cliffe in his own apartment, and the two gentlemen proceeded thither together. Lord Cliffe's business with the Judge was to entreat him to urge his grand-daughter to name an early day, a *very* early day for their marriage. He did not wish, he said, unduly to hasten the lady or her friends, but that really the long delay was more than enough to exhaust the patience of a far more patient suitor than himself. He did not wish to separate the only child from her aged parent—he only wished to secure her, and having done so, would be quite willing to pass the first year of their marriage in America—and after that, alternate years in America and in England, hoping that the Judge would always accompany them to the latter country. The Judge bowed in reply to this speech, and said that he would speak to Virginia—would urge his lordship's wishes, backing them with his own earnest desire; but that there his influence must stop—he would not, and should not, coerce her will in the matter.

And so the interview terminated. And the Judge, remembering his promise to Virginia, rang the bell and desired her presence. Virginia entered the room with a book in her hand and her thumb in it. She came in, and drawing a foot cushion up to her father's easy chair, sat down at his feet, and laying the book open on his knees, with her hands resting upon its pages, turned her eyes up to his, with an expression of serious archness, if I may be allowed the term.

"Well, Virginia, my child, I have sent for you not only in accordance with my promise to you, but also in fulfillment of one just made to Lord Cliffe. And I suspect, Virginia, that both relate to the same subject—your marriage."

Virginia's face flushed, but did not lose its happy, confident expression. Her grandfather then taking both her hands in his, and looking down upon her with the most earnest and anxious affection, began to speak in very serious and even solemn tones. He reported to her the sum of Lord Cliffe's conversation, and repeating all that he had said to her upon a former occasion, touching the long delay of her marriage, now longer by more than a year than then—his own earnest desire to see her settled in life before he should be called away—his own great age—and the uncertainty of life—finally, he besought his child, as she loved him, to make him easy, and her suitor happy by naming a day for their marriage.

"Now, was it not in relation to this marriage that you came to speak to me, Virginia?"

"Yes, dear grandfather, it was—and to tell you that I know that it would be wrong in me to suffer Lord Cliffe to go on any longer under the influence of an error."

"What is that, my dear Virginia?"

"To permit Lord Cliffe to devote any more of his time and attention to one who can never be his wife!"

"My child, you shock and grieve me beyond measure!" said the Judge, with a look of sorrow and amazement.

"My dear and honored grandfather, I very much regret that it is so—but listen to my objections, dear sir, and you will not blame me; hear me quite out, and I am sure you will not feel anxious or even uneasy about me!"

"Go on!"

"Dear grandfather, please to try and remember what happened little more than a year ago. When you first mentioned this subject of my marriage with Lord Cliffe to me, I told you at once whom I loved better than all the rest of the world put together. And when, notwithstanding all that, you advised me to receive Lord Cliffe's addresses, I consented to do so, only telling him, in all candor, of that affection of which I had first told you. He only smiled, entreating time and opportunity for trying to win the first place in my heart. Bound by your wishes and my own promise to you, I agreed to that. I have kept my promise. For more than a year we have lived in each other's almost exclusive society, and I have given him every opportunity he sought, and I have tried to love him for your sake. In vain! For though I love him even a little more than I did last year, yet it is only with that affection induced by habit and association, and which I always feel for any *person* or any *thing*—not positively disagreeable, with which I have lived for any length of time, and not the least dependent upon or connected with respect or esteem. I will tell you, dear grandfather, my whole opinion of Lord Cliffe. I will tell you the various impressions he has made upon me at various times, and the last result in my final idea of him. When I first saw my cousin, and during the first winter of our acquaintance, my impression of him was very unfavorable—that unfavorable impression was effaced when a closer association exhibited to me the fascinations of his manners, and the splendor of his talents, which even dazzled and bewildered me somewhat. A longer and more intimate acquaintance, however, familiarized me with these adventitious accomplishments, and deprived them of their dangerous and misleading power.

while it revealed to me the character of Clinton Carey, Lord Cliffe.'

"Or rather what you suppose to be his real character."

"No, dear grandfather, I am not mistaken—the cloud of unjust prejudice, and the glare of excessive admiration have both passed from my vision, and I see clearly."

"What, then, is the sum-total of your estimate—social, physical, moral and mental, of your lover, Lord Cliffe?"

"My *suitor*, Lord Cliffe—for *lover* he is not, and has never been, and never will be—well, then! I appraise my *suitor* thus—*socially*, he is a nobleman of high rank and great wealth, and promises to become a statesman of great eminence; *physically*, he is an eminently handsome man, with *l'air distingue;* mentally, he is gifted with splendid talents, and brilliant accomplishments; morally, he is brave, ardent, generous, magnanimous—but—but—somewhere—in his sentiments, or feelings, or principles, or opinions—I know not which—he is *unsound*. I could not confide in him. I could not repose in him. I could not feel safe and at ease with him, as I do with, and as I could with—Joseph Carey."

"Ah! Joseph Carey! I very much suspect, my dear, that it was the miraculous touch of Joseph Carey's hand last night that caused the clouds and glare to pass from before your eyes!"

"No—and—yes! grandfather! No—for if yesterday you had urged this marriage upon me, yesterday I should have replied as now—yes—for it was certainly the reappearance of Mr. Carey, that caused Lord Cliffe to press the subject of our speedy marriage. Yes—for the meeting with Joseph Carey has taught me this—that to him only can I in righteousness give my hand!"

"Virginia, my dear child! this is romance, folly!"

"Listen, dear grandfather," she said, and her countenance became earnest, and even devout in its expression. "Listen to me!—'I speak the words of truth and soberness.' I have to-day been reading the SOLEMNIZATION OF MATRIMONY—wherein the woman, calling most devoutly on God to witness her vow—promises—in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost—to love, honor, and obey the man she marries—*until* DEATH. Oh, God! what an awful vow! what an awful vow, even in favor of one whom we *do* love deeply, and honor highly, and would be willing to obey implicitly. What an awful vow!—not to say, perjury!—not to say, sacrilege!—not to say, BLASPHEMY!—as it would be on my lips, were I to stand before God's altar, and call on God's name to witness that I would LOVE TILL DEATH, a man whom, as a husband, I could not love *at all*—that I would HONOR TILL DEATH, a man I cannot sincerely *respect even*—that I would OBEY TILL DEATH, a man in whose integrity I cannot even *trust!!*—Good Heaven! I wonder a woman's tongue is not palsied with horror when she commits such an awful perjury!"

"She considers it merely a form! Too much perhaps, that ceremony has been considered a form."

"Merely a form!—with the heart, and brain, and conscience assenting to every inspired word contained in the vows, if they are spoken in sincerity, and God invoked to witness them!"

"Yes! too much this has been considered a mere form."

"Dear grandfather, all this—love, honor, service, obedience, I can promise with a clear conscience, a fervent heart, and a steadfast will, and in the sight of God, to Joseph Carey. For I have loved, and honored, and obeyed him from the time I can first remember till the time he left us. Never a doubt of his wisdom or goodness has crossed my mind—I love and honor him more than ever!"

Judge Washington groaned. His family prejudices, in spite of his better nature, were deeply wounded. He replied—

"Virginia! I will not insist upon your marrying Lord Cliffe! Perhaps—though it was Colonel Carey's darling wish, and is also my earnest desire, and I stand over you invested with *his* delegated as well as my own personal authority—perhaps, strictly speaking, I have no right to do so; but I certainly object to your marrying Joseph Carey, a young man who, though admirable in many respects, is no match for Miss Washington."

"No match for me, grandfather! No! Heaven doth truly know that he is not, unless a superior is a *match* for an inferior."

"You are, as I said, romantic, Virginia!—think, my child, how it would sound in your native county, where you are the last sole representative of two of the oldest families, and two of the largest estates in the county—and where, from the hour you were born, and known to be a girl, it was a subject of speculation as to who your future husband, the future master of the two great estates would possibly be—how will it sound through the State—the *State* in which your hand was considered the one great prize to be contended for by the most distinguished among the unmarried men of the commonwealth—how will it sound when it is said that Miss Carey Washington has bestowed her hand and fortune upon a penniless adventurer, indebted to her mother's charity for his very name?"

"A name that he has made illustrious! Oh! grandfather, I do not know how it may sound to

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Old Virginian prejudices, when Old Virginian families hear that 'Miss Carey Washington has bestowed her hand and fortune upon a penniless adventurer;' but I know what a proud and happy day it will be for Ginnie, when Joseph Carey takes her to his heart forever! Grandfather, I wish you could feel as I do!—as my sainted mother would feel, were she on earth!"

"Virginia! I said that I objected to your marriage with this young man," repeated Judge Washington, emphatically, as he folded his arms, leaned back in his chair, and looked at her gravely.

Virginia met his steady gaze unflinchingly—though her eyes were full of sadness and determination.

"What do you say to this, Virginia?"

"That I am very sorry, sir!"

"But determined, nevertheless, to marry him?"

Virginia was silent, and dropped her eyes upon the ground.

"Favor me with a reply, if you please, Miss Washington!"

Virginia's brow crimsoned with confusion. It was the first time in all her young life that her grandfather had called her Miss Washington, and it wounded her deeply—nevertheless she replied, in clear, steady tones,

'My dear grandfather, I believe that one so wise and good as yourself, will not long persist in an objection, founded only on the prejudice of rank, and to one so noble as Joseph Carey! and believing in that, and trusting in God, we will wait a little. Dear grandfather, forgive me if I have offended you, and bless me for my dead parents' sake—for I cannot smile again to-day if you are displeased with me."

The Judge laid his hand upon her fair, bowed head, and gently said,

"God bless you, Virginia, my child! and God bring you, or—*me*, to the right way of thinking!"

And so he dismissed her.

Joseph Carey came to dinner according to appointment, and, notwithstanding all that had passed between Virginia and her grandfather, Judge Washington received him with the utmost kindness of manner, and soon drew him into giving an account of Farther India, the Christian Missions, etc., to which Virginia and Helen listened with the profoundest interest.

Lord Cliffe was really and deeply anxious at heart, but he was too well bred to betray his uneasiness. So that, notwithstanding a few hidden, disagreeable elements, the evening passed very agreeably. Joseph Carey took leave at a rather late hour. Soon after his departure, Judge Washington, much fatigued, retired to his chamber. Virginia and Helen were preparing to follow his example, when Lord Cliffe detained the former, by saying,

"One moment, Miss Washington, if you please, and if Miss Hervey will excuse us?"

Helen Hervey bowed and left the room, closing the door behind her. Lord Cliffe led Virginia to the sofa, and seating himself by her side, and holding her hand, and looking sadly, tenderly, half reproachfully in her face, he said, in a pensive tone,

"Virginia, dearest, 'how long?' 'how long?'"

She lifted her eyes full of deprecation to his face.

"Virginia, how long will you keep me in this suspense?"

"May God—may you forgive me the weakness, ignorance and sin of having kept you in suspense so long, Clinton—I will do so no longer—no, not a day."

"You will set my heart at rest at once, my dear Virginia, by naming to-night, the day, at no great distance, I trust, when I shall call you my wife—will you, Virginia?" he said, pressing her hand.

She withdrew it, and said kindly, but firmly,

"Lord Cliffe, you have widely misconceived my meaning. Understand it now. I can never be your wife!"

"Miss Washington!!" he exclaimed, in a tone of indignant astonishment; but then quickly controlling and recovering himself, he became again perfectly cool, calm, self-possessed, and said, with a slight wave of his hand, "Forgive my haste, Virginia; but the overwhelming shock of such an annunciation, my dear love! Virginia—" he continued, taking her hand caressingly—"Virginia, you do not mean what you say?"

"Indeed, indeed I do, Clinton!"

"What! you can never be my wife?"

"Never, never, Clinton."

"But I *love* you so, dear Virginia—will you—can you cast away all that affection?"

"Love me! Yes, I know you love me, Clinton, but—oh, dear!"

"What?"

"Why, yes, you like me after a fashion as I perhaps like you—but—"

"Well?"

"You do not like me as you love one whom—did 'time, place and circumstance adhere'—you would prefer to marry rather than all others!"

"And who is that, Virginia?" he asked, in a slightly unsteady voice.

"I do not know her name, or person, or abode, but she is the original of that miniature which I have never yet beheld, but which I have seen you gaze upon with—oh! how many strong, various, and opposite emotions at different times!—love! pride! sorrow! triumph! remorse!—*all*, save anger, hope, or fear!—with all passions that refer to the past, with none that relate to the future! Oh, yes! that pictured image has power to trouble the deep waters of your soul as never

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my living face and smile and touch has been able to do!—*Ah!*—does your countenance change so at the bare allusion to one so passionately beloved? Yes, Clinton, you like me, I know! Were every circumstance of rank and wealth satisfactorily adjusted, and you were married to the unknown, you would be well pleased to have *me* also in your sight, by your fireside, coming and going through your house! You would be happier for my presence, for you like me with a genial, cousinly regard—*but!—now mark me!* Reverse the case. Were you married to *me*, could you bear the presence of that other one? could you endure to have her always in your sight, by your fireside, coming and going through your house? Would you be any happier for her presence? Ah! no! no! It would destroy, utterly destroy your peace! Ah! no! for it is *her* you love with all your heart and soul! Go, Clinton, my cousin, leave one whom you do not love best, and who does not love you best—leave *me*—impale your sinful pride, and marry the original of that miniature, who, certainly, if not beneath your *love*, should not be considered below your rank!"

"That is the special pleading of youth, romance, and sentiment, my love! All natural, proper, and beautiful, in one of your age and disposition! But, Virginia, dearest, you must permit me to be the best judge of the woman best suited to me—and so, I claim with pride and joy *your* promise to become my bride," he said, passing his arm around her waist, and attempting to draw her within his embrace—but with a gentle dignity she withdrew, and replied,

"Lord Cliffe, I have told you that I cannot be your bride."

"But your promise, Virginia! You gave me your promise!"

"My lord, I *did* give you that promise—weakly and ignorantly I gave it to you, and you accepted it; but afterward I told you all that was in my heart, and you kindly and graciously *released* me from my vow, promising on your own part never to demand the fulfillment of our engagement, until you should have won the first place in my humble heart—you have never done so, Lord Cliffe! *The place is filled*, but not by *you*, my cousin! So I stand absolved from my promise!"

"Special pleading again, my dear Virginia, *very* special. You are *not* absolved! Virginia! in admitting my addresses, and by so doing, in encouraging my hopes, you have virtually *renewed* your promise every day! Come, Virginia! My treasure! my prize! I cannot so readily yield you up! I claim your promise!"

"I can never, *never* be your wife, Lord Cliffe!"

"But *your promise!*"

"If it *is* so—if I *have* tacitly renewed that promise—may God in His infinite mercy forgive me for the great sin of having made it!—may God in His infinite mercy keep me from the far greater sin of performing it!"

"Forgive you for the sin of making a promise—keep you from the greater sin of performing it! What absurd sophistry is this, my Virginia?"

"No sophistry, but the Lord's holy truth and reason! God forgive me for getting myself in a false position! God deliver me from it!"

"Virginia—"

"Listen to me, Lord Cliffe! You say that I have made you a promise that I am bound to fulfill in becoming your wife—but, Lord Cliffe, if I do so—if I go before the altar with you, I shall not make a promise, but in the name, and in the sight of God, RECORD A VOW—that with every pulsation of my heart, and every aspiration of my breath—every instant of my life—I shall *break* with a breaking heart! If I have *tacitly*, as you say, promised to be your wife, while I yet could not love you—may the Lord forgive me my sin, and defend me from putting it to compound interest."

"Your aged grandfather's earnest desire for this union of ours! is *that* nothing to you, Miss Washington?"

"I opened my heart to my dear grandfather this morning. I have the fullest confidence in Judge Washington's wisdom and goodness. I trust in the Lord, that his wishes will finally be one with mine."

"It is the return of this Joseph, madam! this nameless adventurer!"

"This illustrious philosopher, politician, missionary, and philanthropist you mean!" said Virginia.

"Enough! It is the return of this person that has changed all your purposes!" exclaimed Lord Cliffe, rising in anger, and pacing the room with rapid strides. "It is the return of this *fellow!*"

"*It is,*" said Ginnie, elevating her red head till it flashed as brightly as her flashing eyes. "It is—the return of Joseph Carey—my life giver! my crown of life! my king—whom—were he to call me to it now—I would even now pass out from among you all, and follow barefoot through the world, even unto the world's extremity, too happy to walk in his shadow! *Lord Cliffe, I hope you have your answer!*"

Many times, with rapid strides, he walked up and down the room, and then he came again to Virginia's side, took her hand, and while he held it, said,

"Virginia, I entreat your pardon—extreme disappointment—extreme chagrin has caused me to forget myself—and *you!*—pardon me."

"Forgive *me*, Clinton, if all these many months I have suffered you to cherish an illusion. I, myself, have been under an illusion—in regard to what my duty was—*one* duty, filial obedience,

carried to a blind excess, made me forget for that, the higher duty of truth to God and man, made me dizzy with confusion, reeled me to the verge of a great moral precipice—that of marrying one to whom every pulsation of my heart must needs be false."

"But, Virginia—"

"Oh, Clinton! I know *now* that I am doing right! I know as well as if an angel had come down from heaven and told me, that I am doing right! My head is clear—my heart is strong. I have now no doubt or fear!"

At this moment a low rap at the door was answered by Lord Cliffe, who went and opened it, wondering at the interruption at this unusual hour. It was one of the waiters of the hotel, who, placing a note in his hand, said, in apology,

"The messenger who brought this, sir, urged its immediate importance."

"Did the messenger wait?" inquired Lord Cliffe, turning over in a gingerly manner the very dirty missive.

"No, sir, he is gone."

"You may retire," and the waiter left the room. Lord Cliffe went to the lamp, opened and read the note—became excessively agitated—crushed and threw the paper into the grate, and saying to his companion, "My dear Virginia, excuse me, I am called out on business of vital moment! Retire, my dearest girl! You will—you *must* reconsider your rejection of me yet—but—retire, Virginia, that I may leave you," and lighting the chamber lamp, he rang for her maid, who came to attend her to her own apartment.

Two hours after that, when the hotel was closed, a violent ringing of the principal door bell aroused the watchman, and then the whole household.

Great and increasing terror and dismay, noise and confusion, spread through the house.

The servants and officers of the hotel—the landlord, and even the guests, and finally the aged Judge Washington himself, hastily dressed, and hurried to the scene of action, where they found Lord Cliffe extended lifeless and covered with blood upon a litter, and Joseph Carey in the hands of the police!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE SICK SOUL.

Canst thou not minister to the mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
That weighs upon the heart?

Shakspeare.

The medical faculty, the hydropathists, the homœpathists—all attempt to teach us *physical hygiene;* an eminent metaphysician has given us a theory of *mental hygiene;* there is also a *moral hygiene*—this last requiring more skill in its management than either of the former—a moral pharmacopœia, dispensed with perfect skill only by the great Physician of souls.

Pure precept and high example are moral stimulants; sympathy, compassion, affection, are moral anodynes; opposition, persecution, sorrow, are moral tonics; the right of depravity is a moral emetic, so sickening the soul with evil as to excite a desire to throw off even the "perilous stuff" from its own bosom.

But of course this moral dispensatory—like the medical pharmacopœia—unskillfully dispensed, become poisons instead of medicines—injure or kill, instead of benefitting and curing.

And as all spiritual truths and material facts correspond, I think there is a spiritual homœopathy—for a noble but erring soul; a point at which the contact of a depraved nature, by offending and arousing all its dormant good, excites an energetic and healthful reaction. Thus—

I have heard of a beautiful coquette—a vain and unthinking, but an intelligent and well-meaning girl, regenerated by the sight of a fashionable married belle, whose immodest freedom of manners offended her purer taste.

I have heard of a free indulger in wine reformed by the disgust produced at the sight of a sot.

The examples of this truth are almost infinite.

But the instance I have before me, is a greater and more signal case: When a "high mind of native pride and force" has fallen under the dominion of an evil passion—or, in other words, caught a moral malignant fever—and is in process of cure by the intense loathing it conceives for a depraved nature, to the constant association with which its own malady has brought it.

And such was the case with Magdalene.

More than twelve months have elapsed since we saw her last. During all this time she has followed her art in the city of Boston—haunted, tortured, nauseated by the foul spirit her own evil passions had invoked—by the Italian who seldom left her side. Guileful, cowardly and treacherous, she had discovered him to be. From the profoundest depths of her soul she abhorred him—and this abhorrence extended to everything in her own nature, surroundings and purposes of which he in the slightest degree partook. That fascinating histrionic art which had once been an enthusiasm with her, was beginning to present itself to her apprehension in the repulsive colors of vulgarity and extravagance, because *he*, with his loathsome wickedness, was intimately connected with it. And that SACRIFICIAL JUS-

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TICE which was the insanity of her heart and the object of her life, was beginning to take the hue of vengeance and assassination, which her whole nature renounced and revolted from!

And yet—and yet if this depraved and abhorred wretch came to her with hand crimsoned with crime, and claimed her own hand as his stipulated reward, she must give it to him, for she had promised, and JUSTICE was Magdalene's regnant thought!

In a moment of extreme madness, when the sudden sight of the traitor had aroused her malign passions into reckless and destructive strength, she had made this dark contract with him—into this fearful position had her moral insanity betrayed her.

Strong as her physical organization was, her passions were of more *enduring* strength, and in the long continued struggle, the intense, suppressed excitement, the burning monomania of an unsatisfied JUSTICE, as she called it—vengeance as it was—was beginning to consume even Magdalene's highly tempered constitution.

Not that her beauty waned as yet—no! kindled by the fire in heart and brain, her cheeks and lips glowed with the beautiful brilliance, and her eyes blazed with the intolerable light and splendor of that incipient madness, that restrained frenzy, which, checked in word and gesture, lurked and flashed in the darkening and lightening countenance.

But health and strength, and life itself was burning out. Her nights of high exhiliration were followed by mornings of complete prostration. Thus, fevered and exhausted, by the heat and glare and turmoil within her, and the heat and glare and turmoil around her—burning and consuming, fainting and sinking—Magdalene indeed like a sorely wounded and hunted lionness, would gladly have found some cool, fresh, green forest glade in which to lie down and die.

In this state of mind she would often return from the theatre after a night of triumph, fevered and exhausted, and throw herself upon her bed, and sink into a deep sleep. Often then her mind, in dreams, would travel back to the sweet home and sweet friends of her childhood, and again she would be sitting in some pleasant chair in the cool piazza, with the rolling green plains and the distant waters of the Chesapeake spread out before her—and Ginnie by her side, and the good Judge near—with that sweet sense of safety repose, seclusion, love and leisure around her; and she would awake in a stifling room, with a weary task, and a revolting public exhibition before her, and instead of Virginia and her father, the repulsive Italian. As she marked his sinister countenance, and keen bright eye that underneath its heavy lid glittered like a half-sheathed stiletto, she dreaded every day when he should come to her and claim her promise!

She never, by even the most distant allusion, referred to their fell contract—for the very memory of it curdled her blood with horror.

Not that her fierce purpose of more than four years growth was beginning to decay—no!—her sense of JUSTICE, by nature an excess, by cultivation a monomania—justice without mercy!—demanded an atonement, a sacrifice, a victim! He that had betrayed her unto worse than death —MUST DIE! So her JUSTICE had decreed!

And nothing but the consummation of this justice—this revenge—and the terrible retributive power of remorse, could bring her to sanity upon this subject.

But her justice, in the hands of the Italian took the black hue of murder

It was in the height of the theatrical season, and near Christmas, when one morning the Italian was missing from his post. The stage-manager sent to his lodgings, but he was not there. Needing his services very much in the rehearsal of a musical passage, he was sought in all his usual haunts, without being found. The day passed, and he had not made his appearance.

The next day his continued absence occasioned increasing surprise and conjecture. When a week had passed away, and Bastiennelli was still among the missing, surprise was at its height—but when a fortnight had elapsed, and no news of him had been received—conjecture itself was exhausted.

His mysterious absence, conjoined with the circumstances of that dark compact between him and herself, filled Magdalene with a dreary uneasiness.

This uneasiness became a terrible anxiety, when one day picking up an old Richmond paper, she saw announced the arrival of Judge Washington and family, and Lord Cliffe, at the Richmond Hotel. The paper was dated about ten days prior to the departure of the Italian, yet she instantly and fearfully connected the circumstances. Nothing but Magdalene's unparalleled self-command could have enabled her to attend the rehearsal, and go through her part with intelligence.

She instantly resolved to set out for Richmond by the very next stage, that left the ensuing morning. Returning from the theatre, heated and exhausted, she threw herself upon a sofa, where she had not lain long before her maid brought her the morning paper.

She did not feel inclined to read—yet something—she knew not what—caused her to open the paper, and cast her eyes over its columns.

Suddenly, with a cry of horror, she sprang from the couch—with the sharp cry, and the fierce spring of one shot through the heart, she bounded up!—then sunk back, with both hands pressed to her forehead, while the long, low wail of a lost spirit slowly howled from her lips.

She had read the announcement of the murder of Lord Cliffe!

Oh, woman of "demoniac firmness,"—where is your demon-power *now?* Come let us reckon together! You have the desire of your heart! The one great object of your life is accomplished. Your unparalleled wrong is avenged. Your mortal foe is slain. Vengeance is complete! Then why that low, long, deep, fearful wail?

Vengeance is complete.

Yes, so complete that the memory of the wrong is blotted out, and anger is annihilated!

She could remember now nothing of his sin—his treachery—only his love—that love which had so blessed the brightest period of her girlhood's years. From the moment that he had first taken her to his bosom, to the hour of their final parting, never had one ungentle word or look escaped him—never had one smallest disagreement arisen between them—he had been self-devoted, earnest, fervent, solicitous in his affection and care of her while they lived together—he had sought to be so after they had parted. Was there not *something* good and gentle, noble and forbearing in that erring nature? Might she not have attempted to redeem it? *But no*—not one word to bring him to better thoughts and feelings had she spoken—not one appeal to his better nature had she made—no! not even in the hour of their parting, when she had seen him softened, saddened—how distinctly she recalled the scene!—not one word had she spoken!—not one appealing look or gesture had she given! No! the mighty power of influence she possessed!—the mighty power of beauty and eloquence—which should have been used to *redeem* him, and to save herself—had been used to destroy both! With the fascinations that should have won and saved him, she had bribed and armed a dastardly assassin to destroy *him*, and consume *her* with horror and remorse.

All these thoughts and feelings whirled into her mind and heart with tempestuous rapidity—but once there remained fixed as forever—while she remained with her hands pressed upon her brow, unconscious of the suffocating distension and fiery burning of her chest and throat—while she lay with the low continuous wail issuing from her still lips.

Suddenly the door was thrown open, and the Italian burst into the room, dusty, travel-stained, heated, haggard; and with blood-shot eyes and trembling frame threw himself upon his knees before her—seized her hands, and said—

"Signora! your commands are obeyed! *My* part of our contract is fulfilled! Your mortal foe is dead by my hand! I claim my reward! Signora! there is no time—no! not a moment to be lost! every instant I remain here is fraught with imminent danger! Come! gather your money and jewels together! a carriage waits below! a ship sails for Europe with the first tide to-morrow morning! Hasten! hasten! We will go instantly out to some village and be married! and at nightfall embark! Hasten, Signora! hasten!" he said, and pulling her hands, raised her.

Did she lose her senses straightway? Did she go mad? Did she rave and tear her hair? No! She had been mad before! and that horror which might have driven a sane person mad—brought the mad one to perfect sanity. She was calm, self-conscious, self-possessed, while she stood sternly confronting him.

"The price of blood? You want the price of blood? You shall have it!"

"Signora!" exclaimed the Italian, in doubt.

"Yes! I will keep my promise to the very letter of the bond! I will place my hand in yours, stained as it is with crime! I will go to the altar with you! I will become your wife! The sooner the better! this day! this hour! this very instant! because I have promised to do so, and truth and justice is my one predominant thought! But, mark you! By the Eternal Justice of God!—JUSTICE shall have her FULL COURSE! JUSTICE shall be carried out to EXTREMITY! I will go with you to the altar this hour if you will!—but, listen! from the altar I go to the court-house and denounce you as the murderer of Lord Cliffe, and myself as your accomplice! Ha, sir! You thought to find some short-coming—some incompletion in my justice, did you? What think you now of retributive justice?"

The Italian started violently—gazed on her—appalled at the awful majesty of her sternly beautiful countenance! He felt that she would carry out to the uttermost that which she had sworn to do! He gazed at her struck statue-still with astonishment, wonder and terror for awhile—then a smile of demoniac triumph flashed across his countenance, and he exclaimed,

"Be it so! I exact your promise! Be my wife for one hour, and the next deliver me up to the scaffold if you will!"

But even while the demon smile yet distorted his countenance, as he glared upon her, *her* countenance had somewhat changed; her face, that a moment before had been highly flushed, was now deadly pale—a grayness like the shadow of death crept slowly across it—her eyes filmed over—her tall form rocked as a tower about to fall, an instant—then suddenly pressing her handkerchief to her mouth, she fell forward, and was caught in the arms of the Italian, while the handkerchief dropped saturated with the blood that oozed from her lips.

When Magdalene first recovered her sensibility, the feebleness of infancy, mental and physical, was upon her.

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She found herself lying on a bed in a dark and silent room, without the strength to raise her hand or murmur a word.

Soon the silence was softly broken by the voices of two women conversing in a very low tone, that was nevertheless distinctly audible to her morbidly acute ears—and which recalled her to the full and terrible recollection of the past.

They were talking of the late murder.

Her attention became rivetted—her senses were very sharp, her brain very clear, perhaps from the great hemorhage—and so she heard distinctly, and understood fully, that—oh! last of griefs!—that Joseph Carey had been arrested and committed to prison, under the strongest circumstantial evidences. What *were* those evidences? She listened intently, and heard: Joseph Carey had loved a young lady who returned his affection, but who was engaged to Lord Cliffe. Joseph Carey had left the hotel at half-past eleven o'clock. Lord Cliffe had been called out by a note, and had left the house at twelve o'clock. At about one o'clock, a cry of murder had raised the watch, who, running in the direction of the sound, came in front of the hotel, where they found Lord Cliffe lifeless and weltering in his blood, and Joseph Carey standing over him with a drawn and bloody knife, whose blade precisely filled the wound—and upon these circumstantial evidences, Joseph Carey had been committed to prison to await his trial, for the murder of Lord Cliffe!

When Magdalene heard this, she started and tried to speak—but she found that her voice was powerless, while at the effort her hemorhage broke out afresh. The two old women hearing the motion, one of them came to her bed-side, and seeing what had happened, sent the other for the physician, who instantly obeyed the summons. Remedies were applied, and she was again relieved.

Relieved? With the horrible weight of still accumulating guilt upon her burdened soul. Relieved? Hearing that for *her* crime an innocent man was now in prison, and for her crime he might soon die upon the scaffold! while *she*, agonized with remorse, agonized with the intense yet vain desire to speak and clear him—lay without the power of speech or motion, feeble, prostrated, powerless in the grip of a terrible remorse, with only her brain clear, clear as crystal, without a softening mist between her consciousness, and her crime and the stupendous accumulation of guilt, in its consequences! To have a mind so clear and bright, and so distinctly cognizant of her awful crime, and the fearful peril in which it had placed another! and to have a heart so strained upon the rack of conscience, and to know that events were swiftly marching on to their dread consummation! and to be too feeble to utter a single articulate sound, or raise a prayer for justice! Oh! for strength of voice to utter a few short words! Oh! for strength of hand to hold a pen and trace one little sentence! Vain wish! vainer effort! The once strong, beautiful and graceful arms and hands, so significant and speaking in motion and in gesture, now lay stretched down each side her form powerless to do her bidding! The musical and eloquent tongue lay motionless and almost dead within her cold lips! The strong physical constitution is broken and crushed down now! as nothing but REMORSE could have broken and crushed it! The nearly omnipotent will is impotent now! Sampson is chained by single hairs! The potent spirit is bound by the impotency of its frame. The mighty spirit is mighty only in its sufferings! "Oh, God! oh, God! not pardon! not pardon! but power to save the innocent, and time to suffer and to expiate!" was the inarticulate cry of her heart. And when this excrutiating anguish of spirit wrung from her tortured bosom a low wail, some anodyne or opiate would be placed at her lips, to relieve physical pain, or to procure sleep.

Physical pain?

She did not feel it!

Sleep?

What was *her* sleep, but a fearful lapse of her soul into hell!

Her remorse! Oh! words are incapable as she was to express it! But there SHE lay, the strong, the great, the mighty, the woman of unparalleled physical power, whose nerves of steel and muscles of iron had never been weakened by even that extremity of anguish and despair, which had for years subverted her reason and left her the slave of a fell monomania—there SHE lay REVOLUTIONIZED!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COMFORTER.

Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord;
Though your sins be as scarlet,
They shall be white as snow;
Though they be red like crimson
They shall be as wool. *Isaiah.*

Magdalene perceived that only when her attendants supposed her to be in a deep sleep, would they indulge in conversation, which, though carried on in the lowest possible tone, was always distinctly audible to her morbidly acute ears. Now extremely anxious to hear the progress of events, she would often close her eyes and affect to sleep, that she might gather something from their talk. Nothing more, however, bearing even remotely upon the subject of her thoughts, did she hear, until one morning:—

While lying still, with closed eyes, she heard her nurse enter the room, followed by some one, whose light, soft foot-fall did not belong to the attendant physician. Her nurse approached the bedside, bent over her, and said, as in reply to some previous question,

"Yes, sir, you may come and see her now with safety—she is in one of her deep sleeps."

And the nurse receded from the bed, and the light, soft steps approached, and she heard a deep sigh from the lips bent over her brow and cheek, and she heard the low-breathed music of the scarcely articulated words,

"I have found thee at last, my lost Magdalene! And never will I leave thee, until thou sendest me away. I will win thee yet, my soul's own Magdalene!"

And she recognized Theodore Hervey. Then she heard the physician enter the chamber, make his usual inquiries of the nurse, and receive her erroneous reply, that the patient was sleeping. Then she heard Theodore Hervey step away from the bedside, and present himself, by name, to the physician, and soon her attention became riveted by the following conversation between them:

"You seem to be an intimate friend of my patient, sir?"

"I have been the friend of the lady, from the earliest infancy, up to maturity. Of late years, we have been severed by the very opposite natures of our respective professions. We had, in fact, lost sight of each other altogether, until yesterday, having come to the city on a short visit, I entered a gallery of art, saw and recognised her portrait, and discovered her abode. What is the disease of your patient; and do you consider her case very serious?"

"It is serious, sir. There are peculiar circumstances connected with her illness, and these circumstances render her case very complicated and difficult. Her illness is the effect of the rupture of a blood vessel, caused by reading or hearing suddenly, that first most outrageously exaggerated account of the midnight assault upon Lord Cliffe, in Richmond, whom we presume to be a near friend or relative of the lady, from the fact of the terrible effect the report of his murder produced upon her."

"He *was* an intimate friend himself, and, moreover, a near relative of a very beloved companion of hers."

"Ah! well—following this first account of the murder, came another rumor, that Mr. Carey, the celebrated missionary, had been arrested under strong circumstantial evidence—this reached the ears of my patient through the thoughtless gabble of two old women, and threw her into such a state of excitement, as to cause an instant and nearly fatal return of the hemorrhage. She is very much prostrated now, but free from fever, or any local inflammation. In a few days—if she does not sink, as we fear may be the case—we may be able, cautiously and gradually—for the least excitement, of whatever kind, might be instantly fatal to her—we may, I say, be able, cautiously and gradually, to undeceive her, in regard to this false newspaper report of the murder of Lord Cliffe, and the arrest of Mr. Carey!"

"False!" "False!" Had Magdalene heard aright? She uttered a low, inarticulate cry of joy, which startled the physician and the visitor, and instantly arrested their conversation. The doctor stepped to the bedside. Magdalene's hollow eyes were radiant with the light of seraphic gratitude and joy, and her cheeks and lips were crimsoned with excitement; but between the beautiful lips already the scarlet foam revealed where the life blood had again broken its bounds. The physician promptly applied the proper remedies, the nearly fatal hemorrhage was arrested, and the patient, under the influence of a powerful opiate, sank into a profound sleep. Theodore Hervey, in right of his cloth, and his old friendship, took the watcher's station by her side, while the doctor gave his orders for the day to the nurse, and retired. Theodore Hervey remained seated, by the head of the bed, for three hours, watching the face of the deep sleeper. At the end of that time, which brought the middle of the afternoon, seeing her stir, as though about to awake, he silently and cautiously withdrew from his post, and from the room. Magdalene awoke, weaker than ever before—from the increased loss of blood—but with her brain clear as ever, and with a distinct memory of all that had transpired—and, oh! words are impotent to describe the deep, intense gratitude, that moved her whole soul to God. Delivered from blood guiltiness! Her life saved from death! Her soul redeemed from perdition! And, oh! above all, *he*, whom—now that her hatred and revenge had been annihilated—she would almost peril that soul to save—alive and possibly well! Yes, her deep joy and gratitude were great beyond conception, and must have been fatal in their first excess, but for one drawback, one sad qualification—he *had* been attacked, and at *her* instigation. If he had escaped death, it was not by her interference that he escaped, and—he *must* have been wounded—*might* have been dangerously wounded, and even now be very ill. This reflection, when she awoke, sobered the first exultant joy of her soul into a deep and earnest gratitude for his delivery from death—for her delivery from great crime—leaving her the fervent hope that all might yet be well with him—though, for herself, she felt that all life's pleasures must be over.

At the physician's next visit he pronounced her much better than she had ever been since her first attack, and meeting Mr. Hervey down

informed him that the next day he might be introduced to her—adding,

"I suspect from her improved state this morning, and, above all, from the calm expression of her countenance, that when we believed her to have been sleeping, she overheard our conversation, and obtained, without our intending it, that very piece of news which we were so much afraid of imparting lest it should, as it did, bring on a return of the hemorrhage. Well, she has survived it, and now, with her heart relieved, she will get well. What a wonderful constitution she has! And what a strength of attachment to one who was only her friend, cousin! There must have been more in it than that!"

The next day, Theodore Hervey was introduced at her bedside, when she was known to be awake, and though she could not move or speak, she looked at him and smiled a welcome full of affection. He sat down and took her wasted hand, and quietly and cautiously introducing a subject of which he knew her thoughts were full, yet which would not agitate her so much as the other topic did; he spoke of Virginia, and her unwavering affection, and her unceasing desire to be reunited to her sister—and of the letter entrusted to himself, which, he said, he would deliver when she should be able to read or to hear it read. Then he told her of Judge Washington, whose confidence in his adopted daughter remained undiminished, and who longed to receive her again. Theodore paused now, and continued holding her hand and watching the changing expression of her face. Magdalene gazed at him with such an intensity of expression in her deep, bright, hollow eyes, that he understood her question, and bowing his head in compliance, got up and requested the nurse to leave him alone with her patient a few minutes—returned to his seat by the head of the bed—took her hand again, and said, gently,

"Magdalene—can you bear to hear the true account of that assault—whose false report gave you so much trouble?"

A slight motion in affirmation, and a look so calm, replied to him, that he went on.

"I will tell you, Magdalene, as much as I know from the corrected newspaper reports, and from a letter from my sister. There was a man boarding at the same house of the name of Bastiennelli, who, it seems, was in the confidence of the publisher of the Journal—the Richmond paper in which the false report originated. In the first dismay and confusion that prevailed—when the supposed dead body of Lord Cliffe was brought into the house, and while his lordship was yet insensible, and Mr. Carey yet in the hands of the police, this Italian went off to the Journal office, which, late as the hour was, was still open, and had the paragraph inserted with all its falsehood and exaggeration that has been so nearly fatal to you, Magdalene. The next day, of course, the report was contradicted, but not in time to save you all that you have suffered, Magdalene. Lord Cliffe's wounds were very slight. As soon as he recovered from the insensibility, caused by a heavy blow on the back of his head received in falling, an investigation ensued, which immediately cleared Joseph Carey. Lord Cliffe was confined to his sofa for a few days, but is now perfectly well, and remains with the Judge and his family, who have removed to their town-house for the winter. My sister is with them. Dear Magdalene, you have now heard all that is needed to set your mind at rest, and you must listen no more just now, but compose yourself to sleep."

But again the intense look and a slight motion of the lips drew Theodore's attention, he stooped down and caught the breathed word:

"The assassin?"

"Has not yet been arrested," replied Theodore.

Again the intense look and the feebly moving lips drew his ear down to catch her whisper—"*Bastiennelli*," was the only word he caught, and misunderstanding the purport of that, he replied,

"The man who originated the false report?—he had committed a large robbery the very night he left Richmond, and has since eluded the police, and effected his escape to Europe. No one can guess the motive for his act."

Finding it impossible to make him understand her self-accusation, and completely exhausted by her efforts, Magdalene closed her eyes, as a signal for him to depart

He left her, and she remained with her eyes closed to shut out all external objects, while her soul communed with itself, and was still. Exhausted as were her other physical powers, her brain was preternaturally active.

She reviewed her whole life from earliest infancy to the present hour; and how had she passed it, and what had she been? Her childhood, it is true, furnished her with little for self-reproach—lonely, strong and self-reliant, her strength had been used to succor and protect all things weaker than herself—and much for self-palliation; her stern training had strengthened that very spirit of justice without mercy, which passion had kindled to frenzy. But self-justification was not her thought or purpose now. So, quickly passing the memories of her childhood's years, she dwelt upon those of her youth and womanhood—when, gifted with more than woman's fortitude and endurance, and more than man's courage and energy, despising the sweet seclusion of her rural home, and the quiet routine of domestic life, and spurning the influence of father and sister, whose gentleness and refinement were no match for her pride and strength, and re-

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gardless of what their love might suffer—in the mad arrogance of power, she had left them, to carve out for herself an independent path through life. Here a new light glimmered on her soul, revealing to her how really blind and inconsistent had been her merely human sense of justice—that justice for which she had so highly valued herself. How just, for instance—she inquired with a mournful irony—how *just* it was to repay all their love, sympathy, care and protection for so many years, with pride, coldness, ingratitude and desertion, inflicting years of grief and anxiety upon them. What a return to make them! How JUST! Never had Magdalene's self-esteem shrunk as it did before this little ray of light. And then to break down her stubborn heart with repentance and sorrowful gratitude, came their message—the father's message, which bade his adopted daughter to come home and lay her wild, hot head upon his bosom for repose and coolness; and the sister's message, that said her heart still wailed for her sister's return—and told her of that sweet rural home, always kept in readiness for her. At any time she might have found what she had so much needed, solitude, coolness, repose. Her "sweet rural home" had been open to her, as the bosom of her Heavenly Father had been, all along.

But her soul travelled on to the thought of one to whom more than all others, she had wished to be *very* just!—Lord Cliffe. Had she not loved him with all the great strength of her strong nature? With a passion as fierce and more selfish than his own. Had she not, in *her* way, used all her fascinations to win him; had she not, in *her* way, done more than half the "love-making?" Was she not more than half responsible for all the evil that had ensued? Yes! yes! her awakened soul replied and shuddered. And, oh! the thought came again, and *still* came—that of all those mighty charms that had been used to win the love her soul craved for its selfish satisfaction, not *one* spell had been essayed to redeem him when he wandered; no! but for the satisfaction of another selfish and demoniac passion, had been used for his destruction—his destruction providentially averted! She shivered to think of that! Then a frantic desire flashed across her brain an instant, and vanished, for she felt that its gratification was impossible—it was this—for the opportunity, not of winning back his love—too much had come and gone between them for *that* even to occur to her mind—but of throwing herself upon his bosom, and weeping out all the remorseful tenderness of her subdued soul.

Finally, clasping, "appraising" her whole life—what had she been? with all her wonderful endowments, what had she been? Only at best, a superb egotist. What had she done for God or man? Nothing. Her whole nature and life had been self—self and still self.

But it would take volumes to transcribe all that passed in an hour's time, through that awakened soul—that for hours and days and weeks, toiled on out of the deep pit of sin and remorse, and through darkness, chaos, error and doubt, towards the light.

The next day Mr. Hervey came again and spent the forenoon with her. He brought the letter of Virginia with him, and with a sign she expressed her wish that he should read it. A great deal of it had been given Magdalene in a message. Now she heard it all—every affectionate and earnest thought and feeling, in Virginia's own simple and touching style—and for the first time, tears overflowed her eyes, and relieved her sorely burthened heart. The love and mercy shown by her fellow beings, had revealed to her soul the Infinite Love and Mercy of her Heavenly Father. Forgetful that any eye but that of God was upon her, she lifted her eyes, and moved her lips in prayer. But Theodore saw the emotion with a gratitude scarcely less than her own.

I am making this too long, too tedious.

Who cannot imagine how, with Magdalene's awakened conscience, and Hervey's piety—the time for days and weeks passed? The daily reading of God's blessed Word—the earnest prayers and fervent thanksgivings, and the sweet communion of soul with soul?

It is true that she could not speak as yet—earnest gazes, tears, smiles, pressures of the hand, upraised glances, were the only means of expression left to her—but these were most eloquent, even in their incompletion.

Daily she gained strength, and daily the countenance, voice and manner of Hervey became more cheerful. You would have said that some bright, long-looked-for light was beginning to dawn on the night of his existence, and that he watched in joyous expectation of the full and glorious day.

CHAPTER XIV.

REMORSE.

High minds of native pride and force,
Most deeply feel thy pangs remorse.
Marmion.

Whether the Italian had played a deep game from first to last—whether he had really gone to Richmond with any hostile purpose towards Lord Cliffe, or whether his master, the fiend, favored him with accident—is not certainly known. All that was ever ascertained, is the fact, that among the very first who hastened to the spot of the catastrophe at the cry of murder, upon the night Lord Cliffe was assaulted, was Bastiennelli, who, having seen the fallen man raised and carried into the hotel, hastened to the office of the Journal where, late at night, or rather early in the morn

ing, as it was, the printers were yet at work getting up the day's paper, and there hastily dashed off that paragraph, grossly exaggerating the assault, which was accepted in confidence, and printed and circulated, and afterwards copied, in good faith, throughout the country, and the sight of which had been so nearly fatal to Magdalene. Two hours after this, Bastiennelli threw himself into the mail stage for Baltimore, on his way to Boston, where he arrived simultaneously with the mail containing the Richmond Journal, giving the false account of the assault. Taking care, for his own private purposes, that Magdalene should get a sight of this paper just previous to his appearing before her, he presented himself to her, and played out the little drama described in a former chapter, the denouement of which formed no part of his plot. When Magdalene had fallen, stricken down by the terrible strength of remorse, and he had seen her utter incapability of accompanying him, he lost no time in escaping on board of the first ship bound for Europe. And this was the last that was heard of him. Subsequent developments revealed, that to secure Magdalene, he wished to avail himself of a crime that he had never even attempted to commit.

Enough of him.

Let us now return to Lord Cliffe, and the hour at which he was borne lifeless into the great hall of the hotel.

When Judge Washington arrived upon the scene of action, and beheld Lord Cliffe insensible in the arms of two men, and Joseph Carey, very pale, in the custody of the police, his first act was to despatch a messenger for a surgeon, his next to request the officers to release Mr. Carey, upon his own official responsibility—then to have the wounded man tenderly lifted, conveyed to the nearest chamber on the ground floor, and laid upon a bed—lastly, to desire the police to disperse the crowd from about the door. And all this took but a few minutes to execute.

The surgeon soon arrived, and was shown into the chamber of the patient, where Judge Washington still watched. He proceeded to the examination of the wounds. Soon he turned to the Judge, and assured him that there was not the slightest danger, or the least cause of uneasiness. That the insensibility of the patient was the effect of a stunning blow received on the back of the head in falling—that the wound in the chest, though bleeding freely, was only a flesh wound, and that the flow of blood was actually proving beneficial in slowly bringing the patient to his senses.

By the time the surgeon had finished dressing the wound in the chest, Lord Cliffe opened his eyes, and appeared perfectly cognizant of all that had happened, as well as all that was now going on.

The Judge feeling most anxious to clear Joseph Carey immediately, drew the surgeon aside, and requested to know whether the wounded man might now, with safety to himself, be permitted to make a deposition as to the facts of the assault, and the person of his assailant.

The surgeon thought that it could be done without risk.

Judge Washington then sat down by the side of Lord Cliffe, and after some inquiries as to his present state of feeling, and some expression of deep regret for the misfortune of the evening, he informed him of the arrest of Joseph Carey, and of the necessity that he should immediately give his testimony for the purpose of clearing him, as well as of pointing out the real criminal, and setting the police upon the true track.

Lord Cliffe instantly arose, supporting himself upon his elbow, and requested Judge Washington, in his magisterial capacity, to administer the oath, and receive his deposition.

The Judge rang for a waiter to bring the Bible, pen, ink and paper, and having them placed upon a stand by the bedside, sat down before it—summoned the physician and the landlord, as witnesses—administered the oath, and prepared to take down his deposition.

Lord Cliffe testified as follows:—That while conversing with Miss Washington, in the ladies' parlor of the hotel, between eleven and twelve o'clock—the bell of the private door was rung, and an instant after, a waiter of the house entered and handed him a note, purporting to come from one, who awaited him at the Eagle House with a message from—(here Lord Cliffe hesitated an instant, and then resumed)—with a message from Miss Mountjoy. Heedlessly he had cast the note into the fire, and feeling a great anxiety to gain news of the missing lady, he had left the house immediately and set out for the appointed place of meeting. He had not proceeded far from the hotel before he perceived that his footsteps were dogged by one who turned as he turned, stopped as he stopped, and dodged and disappeared with the agility of a monkey as soon as observed. He went on his way still followed by this singular individual, whose monkey-like cunning and agility, gave him the appearance of a savage or a maniac. Once or twice he turned with the purpose of arresting him, but, at such moments, he would vanish so suddenly as to baffle pursuit in a dark night. He scarcely deemed the occasion demanded the interference of the watch, and so believing his follower to be some harmless and timid lunatic, and having his thoughts really engaged with a deeper object of interest, Lord Cliffe reached the Eagle Hotel, which, to his surprise and disappointment, he found closed up for the night. Not well pleased

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with the result of his midnight stroll, he turned his steps towards home with his thoughts too deeply absorbed in the subject of his errand to revert to his strange, forgotten follower, until getting in the neighborhood of the Richmond Hotel, he was suddenly thrown to the ground with only an instant's recognition of his strange follower, in the person of his assailant, before he lost his recollection. He knew no more until he found himself upon that bed, with the surgeon and the Judge standing by his side. And here ended his deposition. This, of course, immediately cleared Mr. Carey, who was summoned to give in his testimony. Being sworn, he deposed that having left the Richmond Hotel between eleven and twelve that night, he had gone immediately to the house of Dr. Goodwin which was his temporary home. That just before retiring to bed a message from a dying parishioner summoned the pastor from the house. That he himself had offered his services to go in place of the aged Dr. Goodwin, and was on his way to the house of the dying man—when a fall, and a groan, immediately in his path, attracted his attention—he hastened on just in time to see a singular looking human being with his knee upon the breast of a prostrate man. As he ran to the spot, shouting for the watch at the same time, the assassin sprang up and fled. He stopped to raise the fallen man —drew the knife that remained in the wound, but just then, the watch gathered around, bringing a crowd at their heels, and he was arrested. And here ended the testimony of Mr. Carey.

Both Lord Cliffe and Mr. Carey declared that, dark as it was, it was impossible they could be mistaken in the strange person of the assailant. Neither had ever set eyes on him before, nor could they surmise his name or purpose. Both were impressed with a strong idea of his lunacy. When the examination was over, and Joseph Carey had departed to the bedside of the dying parishioner, in the hope of being yet providentially in time to render some service, if not to the sufferer, at least to his family—and when Lord Cliffe had sunk to sleep, Judge Washington sought his own chamber. Here with his elbow resting upon the table, his head bowed upon his hand, whose open palm covered his eyes, he sat buried in profound thought. A single sentence in the description of the person of the unknown assassin had struck the electric chain of association and memory, and darted a ray of light twenty years into the past, and almost identified the assailant of Lord Cliffe and the destroyer of Mary Washington—the supposed secret foe of the whole Carey family. What motive could any have to hate the Careys? No one had ever been more generally admired and beloved than Colonel Carey and his family. It was a moral impossibility that his son or daughter, both of whom had fallen victims to the unknown enemy, could have given cause of mortal hatred. Was it Colonel Carey himself who had made an enemy of such unrelenting nature, that his hatred extended to all bearing his name? If so, in what manner had he made this enemy? by what act? what had ever occurred in his life? what had ever occurred on his plantation to inspire one person with such a lasting and fatal enmity? But one instance of wrong doing could Judge Washington remember against Colonel Carey. That though strictly speaking not his own act, or by his own orders, had yet occurred on his plantation, and under his authority—and from the memory of this one act, the Judge had ever shrunk with the natural loathing of a humane and refined mind; but as he never could by any chain of circumstances, connect that act with the awful events that speedily followed, he had many times dismissed the thought. But it had recurred again and again, with singular pertinacity. Now it fastened on his mind. Finally he drew his writing-desk towards him, and sitting down, wrote to Broke Shield to come immediately to Richmond.

Early in the morning the surgeon saw his patient again, examined and redressed his wound, and commanded him to lie still for a day or two to give it time to close and heal.

When Virginia and Helen came to breakfast, they missed and inquired for Lord Cliffe, and received for an answer the report that his lordship was not well enough to appear at the table. After breakfast they were told of the assault that had been made upon him in the night, but assured, at the same instant, that all danger was passed. The girls had been awakened from sleep by the noise of many people running to and fro in the night, but supposing such disturbances not unusual or alarming in a large hotel, they had not suffered the least fear or uneasiness.

Virginia asked permission to go to her cousin's room, and having received it, she took her work, and, accompanied by Helen, went thither. The girls passed the greater portion of the forenoon beside the lounge upon which the invalid reposed—amusing his tedious hours of confinement by music, reading or conversation. In the afternoon, Joseph Carey looked in, and spent an hour.

The next day Lord Cliffe was much better, and the third morning from his attack, he left his room!

In the meantime, nothing was heard of the assailant, though the utmost vigilance of the police had been put in requisition.

Lord Cliffe and Mr. Carey persisted in their first opinion that the assassin was a maniac.

A week from the day of the assault upon Lord Cliffe, Judge Washington and his family

removed into their town house, that was now in readiness for their reception and residence through the winter.

During the past week, the Judge's time had been much occupied between public duty and the demands of private friendship. His oldest friend, General Mountjoy, was lying extremely ill, and with the many great needs of sickness and age, exacted much time and attention.

It was the morning succeeding that of their removal into their own house, that the family were knocked up about daybreak, and a request made that Judge Washington would hasten immediately to the house of General Mountjoy, who was lying at the point of death, and desired to see his old friend upon business of the most vital importance. Without a moment's unnecessary delay, Judge Washington hastened to obey the summons.

He was absent many hours.

The family waited breakfast for him until ten o'clock, and then sat down without him. At eleven the postman called and left the day's mail. It was almost an unprecedented event for the Judge to be absent at the mail hour, and yet he had not returned. Virginia took the letters, glanced over their superscription, and started violently as her eye fell upon one letter bearing the Boston post-mark, directed in the handwriting of Theodore Hervey, and marked "*private.*"

"Helen," she said, turning the letter anxiously in her hand, "you got a letter from your brother yesterday, saying that he had *just* reached Boston, did you not?"

"Yes.'

"And here is another, Helen, post-marked Boston, directed to my grandfather, and marked '*private.*' Oh, Helen! what can this mean? It is wrong to be curious—it is foolish to be anxious—yet—Magdalene! oh, how my heart beats! how I do wish father would come!"

At that moment, as though her wish had been magic, the street bell rang, and soon after Judge Washington entered the parlor. Virginia's first impulse was to spring to him, thrust the letter into his hand, and entreat him to read it. But the stillness and solemnity of his countenance awed her. She arose and handed him a chair, and he sank into it silently. Presently she ventured to say to him,

"Father, the mail has come."

"Put it aside, my dear."

"There is a letter from Theodore Hervey—we think that—"

"No matter—leave it a while my child."

Then Virginia recollected, with some compunction, that selfishly absorbed in her own subject of anxiety, she had almost forgotten her father's old friend, whose sick bed, *death-bed*, perhaps, he had just left.

"Father, I hope this also was a false alarm. I do trust that General Mountjoy is no worse!"

"No, my child, he is better."

"Indeed, I am very glad to hear it, father. I thought it would be so. I wish they would not disturb you so needlessly, though."

"You mistake me, my child! General Mountjoy is better, as it is better to be released by death from extreme infirmity and suffering."

"Oh, dear father, is it so? and you have had this trial. You look so fatigued! Won't you lie down in your room, and let me bring you a cup of coffee?"

"Dear child, no—I will not lie down. I have a great deal to do to-day, Virginia. But you may bring me a cup of coffee, my love. Where is Cliffe?"

"In the library, dear father," replied Virginia, as she took his hat and cane, and put them away, and hastened out to get the cup of coffee.

"Shall I call him, sir?" asked Helen Hervey, coming to his side, anxious to serve him.

"No—*yes*, my dear! Go, Helen, and ask him to come here," replied the Judge.

Helen hastened to the library, and soon returned with Lord Cliffe.

When Judge Washington had drunk the cup of coffee brought him by Virginia, he commanded the two girls to be seated—and said,

"What I am about to communicate to you, my children, might as well be kept secret for the present, though in a few days it must be generally known. Much as I know that you will condole with me for the loss of my oldest friend—"

"Oh, sir, we do! indeed we do," said both the girls, while Lord Cliffe *looked* all that he did not speak.

"I am sure of that, my children! Much then as you share in my grief at the loss of so old and dear a friend as the late General Mountjoy, you will nevertheless rejoice, as I do, that he at last rendered full justice to one whom we all dearly love, and who must be found, if she be still alive."

"Magdalene!" exclaimed Virginia.

"Yes, Magdalene. General Mountjoy sent for me, this morning, to take charge of his will—in which he acknowledges his grand-daughter, and—with the exception of a few very trifling legacies—leaves her the whole of his great estate—Mattowa, The Levels, Alta Bayou—all! Virginia, my dear, you are no longer the richest heiress in your native county."

"Oh, thank God, that my sister Magdalene *is!*" replied Ginnie, fervently.

"Lord Cliffe," continued the Judge, turning to his lordship—"when my old friend appointed me *one* executor of his will, and requested me to name a coadjutor, I took the liberty of naming

yourself. It was for that reason that I sent for you now. You and myself are the executors of the last will and testament of the late Governor Mountjoy—and we must immediately take measures for the discovery of his grand-daughter and sole heiress, Magdalene Mountjoy!"

During the latter part of this speech, Virginia's face had paled and flushed, her frame trembled, and her manner betrayed the greatest inward agitation. At last, when the Judge paused, she started up and ran and got the letter of Theodore Hervey, and thrust it into his hand, saying, "Father! dear father! oh! *do* read this letter! Quick! at once, please! Oh! I am sure this *must* contain news of our Magdalene!"

The Judge contemplated her with some surprise, and disapprobation—slowly broke the seal of the letter, and glanced over it. But as he read, his face expressed in turn, surprise, pleasure, perplexity, disappointment, sorrow. "Yes! this letter contains news of Magdalene, my dear child, but news that we can scarcely rejoice at! Theodore has found her in Boston, ill even unto death!"

Virginia turned very pale at his words, and reached out her hand for the letter—but the Judge shook his head, refusing it to *her*, and passing it over to Lord Cliffe, he said, with a significant look—"My lord, as you are associated with me in the trusteeship of Miss Mountjoy's estate, perhaps *this* paragraph may have some interest for *you*, as it has for *me*—perhaps *you* can throw some light upon it—a thing that *I* confess myself utterly unable to do!"

Lord Cliffe received the letter with his customary serenity of manner, and ran his eye calmly over the indicated paragraph. You would never have surmised from his manner of reading, that he had ever heard of Magdalene before.

The passage was as follows:

"The strangest thing about Magdalene's illness is the inexplicable circumstance that occasioned it. It appears that she was in high health, when the morning paper containing that false report, purporting to be an authentic account of the *murder* of Lord Cliffe, was put into her hand. No sooner had she read it, than she became so violently agitated as to cause the rupture of a blood-vessel, which resulted in her very dangerous, if not fatal illness. She was recovering somewhat from the first effects of the hemorrhage, when the conversation of her attendants, (who erroneously supposed her to be sleeping,) turning upon the subject of the supposed murder, she became so terribly shaken, as to cause a return of the hemorrhage. This second attack also yielded to skillful treatment, and she was again getting better, when the fact of Lord Cliffe's escape becoming known to her, her sudden joy was so excessive as to occasion a third and most dangerous relapse. This has also been relieved—but it is the opinion of her physician that she cannot possibly survive another attack. She is now sleeping under the influence of an opiate and I have left her, to write this letter. But what connection is there then, between the fate of Lord Cliffe and her own happiness and life?"

Lord Cliffe read this to the end, and calmly as ever, returned the letter to the Judge without a comment—and rising, begged to be excused, and left the room. He hurried to his own chamber, and with both hands pressed to his throbbing brow, gave himself up to the fiends of remorse, jealousy and anger, that tormented him. At first, for very shame he tried to subdue anger, and cast out jealousy, and suffer only the remorse that was just. He tried to think of Magdalene lying ill and broken with anxiety for him—and to encourage all the penitence that that thought could suggest—but despite his efforts, the image of Theodore Hervey in her sick chamber, by her bedside—as friend, brother, comforter, *lover!* would present itself to his recently awakened jealousy. He had never ceased to love Magdalene—notwithstanding all the wrong he had done her—he had never ceased to love her from the first hour they had met to this—and when in his conventional view of the fitness of things, he had thought of choosing a wife from his own rank in society, and re-uniting the severed branches and estates of his own family, by marrying his cousin, Virginia Washington—he had impaled his own affections no less than Magdalene's fame. And with that strange discord of heart and hand, even while he had pressed his suit most vehemently with Virginia, he had most deeply loved Magdalene. Nay, more! often, often while gazing on her miniature, fascinated, absorbed by the beautiful dark, bright countenance pictured there, which Virginia truly said had more power to trouble the waters of his soul, than her own living face and smile and touch possessed—he would feel an almost incredible temptation to start up and set out in search of his Magdalene. Besides she felt *near to him*, assimilated to him, familiar, intimate, as no other one in the world ever did, or could. In every mood of her strong nature she was acceptable, attractive, *dear* to him. He recalled the hour when she had inspired him with a strength of life, emotion, joy, never approached before or since—and when do you think that was? *the last time he had seen her*, when meeting her in the lobby of the theatre, he had stood one moment astonished, appalled at her still and awful passion—and the next felt an almost irresistible impulse to catch the beautiful Medea to his bosom. He must have done so, but she passed too swiftly, and was lost to him—and he had the opportunity of recovering his self-control. Nevertheless, from that hour his passion for Magdalene had returned in all its pristine force. Did he re-

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gard her threat, knowing the stern strength of her character? Not a whit! He alone possessed the key of that character. Was he shocked at the deep and bitter intensity of her desire for revenge? Not in the least. He knew that that burning passion might last years, many years, a lifetime—until it had consumed its victim—if he himself permitted it to last so long. But he knew also, that once by the side of his lioness, with his own arm about her waist and her head upon his bosom, and his voice in her ear—with one word of pledged faith upon his tongue, all that vengeance would be changed; the waters of Marah would be made sweet, and roll back in a sea of returning love, such as weaker natures could not feel or sustain. And not one whit of Magdalene's strength of anger or of love—because it *was* strength—would *he* have wished abated.

Since Virginia's firm and final rejection of his suit, his thoughts had reverted again and again to Magdalene, with undivided force.—A thousand times had he cursed the false pride, with which he had cheated his own heart, and betrayed hers. Not very much did he regret Virginia's decided refusal of his hand—that cut one cord holding him from his duty, and his *deeper* inclination, which his pride prevented him from severing with his own act.

These had been his thoughts, even while his idea of Magdalene's habitation and circumstances had been very vague.

Now the recent events of General Mountjoy's death and will, by which he had left her an immense fortune, and the simultaneous arrival of Theodore Hervey's letter, announcing her extreme illness at Boston and the *cause* of her attack, had so drawn to a focus all his vague and scattering thoughts, feelings, and purposes; had so intensified his desire of seeing Magdalene, and throwing himself upon her deep love—that deep love that underlaid all else in her nature—for restoration; his being appointed co-executor, with Judge Washington, of her grandfather's will; his exact knowledge of her residence and condition, had so smoothed his path before him, that finally all these motives decided him to seek her presence without delay.

Writing a hasty note to Judge Washington—and explaining his secession by her rejection, and *other circumstances of equal moment*—he begged leave to withdraw all pretensions to the hand of Miss Washington. Then requesting his host to excuse his hasty absence for a few days, and to make his respectful adieus to the ladies of his family, he bade him farewell for the present.

He sent this note to the library, to be left until Judge Washington should find it, and feeling very much disinclined for company, he left the house, and soon after set out for the North.

CHAPTER XV

JOSEPH CAREY'S DESTINY.

To wed the earliest loved—
She whom in laughing childhood and ripe youth
Was ever thine—with whose advancing thought
Yours grew entwined, and who at last doth yield
Her maiden coyness, and in mystic bond
Will link herself to thee, one heart, one life
Bind ye together—in the innermost soul
Either be known to other. *Alford.*

When Judge Washington read that portion of Theodore Hervey's letter, which referred the sudden and nearly fatal illness of Magdalene to the shock sustained by her on hearing of the attack made upon Lord Cliffe's life, his suspicions as to the real state of affairs between them were, for the first time, excited. When he placed the letter in Lord Cliffe's hands, and called his attention to the paragraph in question, watching him, and observing his countenance change as he read it, his distrust was increased; when Lord Cliffe returned him the letter, without one word of comment, and rising in haste, suddenly left the room, his doubts were greatly augmented. Finally, when late in the afternoon he received his lordship's note, respectfully withdrawing his suit to Miss Washington, and taking leave of the family for the present, his doubts were fully confirmed, his mind made up, and his own course of action decided upon.

But just now the last offices of friendship to the late General Mountjoy, claimed his whole attention. As the intimate friend of the deceased, and as one himself in a high official station, he was very properly selected to negotiate with the family of General Mountjoy, on the part of the State authorities, who wished to show every fitting respect to the memory of the late ex-Governor, without obtruding upon the sacredness of private grief. Thus his part in the arrangements of the obsequies, occupied him exclusively for several days. The day of the funeral solemnities was one of most painful "parade" to Judge Washington.

All places of business, and all public offices were closed. The city was hung in black—from sunrise the minute cannonading commenced—many military and volunteer companies were ordered out—the streets were crowded with soldiers, citizens, horses, and carriages—the air was filled with mournful martial music, and all the

"Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious *death*"

was upon the scene of action.

At an early hour of the day, Judge Washington's family was, as friendship demanded, with the family of the deceased.

In the absence of Dr. Goodwin, their pastor,

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who was still confined to his house with indisposition, the Rev. Mr. Carey performed the burial service, after the manner of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

At the close of the funeral obsequies, at a late hour in the afternoon, Judge Washington and his family returned to their own house. He had invited Joseph, who was now with the bereaved household, to come to him in the evening. As soon as they reached home, the Judge retired, in deep thought, to his study, and the girls went to their respective chambers to repose awhile, and prepare for tea.

At seven o'clock, their early supper hour, the family assembled in the parlor, where Joseph Carey soon joined them. The solemn events of the day had thrown a shade of seriousness over the evening circle. Judge Washington himself was still absorbed in deep thought. When tea was over, and they had gathered around the centre-table, Helen and Virginia with their needlework, and Joseph Carey with a volume of Shakspeare, to read aloud, at Ginnie's request, the tragedy of King Lear, Judge Washington, in variance with his custom, sat apart in his large, easy chair. Before obeying Ginnie's command, Joseph turned to the Judge and inquired if he were well—if the reading would disturb him?

"No, my dear Joseph—go on," replied the Judge, in a tone and manner of such familiar and endearing affection, that Ginnie turned her eyes on her grandfather, with a look full of the deepest love and highest veneration, and then upon Joseph, with an expression of security and happiness. The reading went on, and the length of the play filled up the long winter evening.

At its conclusion, a half-hour was spent in conversation, and then the Judge requested Mr. Carey to read the evening prayers. Virginia arose, and getting the Bible and prayer-book, placed them on the stand before Joseph. Helen rang for the domestics, who, with quiet and orderly decorum, soon after entered, and took their places. The evening services commenced—proceeded—ended—and the domestics quietly withdrew from the room.

Joseph Carey arose to take leave, but at a sign from the Judge, he resumed his seat.

Judge Washington called Virginia to his side, and when she came and stood by him, with so much of love and of expectation on her speaking countenance,

"Ginnie," he murmured, and there was a world of affection in the tone in which he pronounced this soft abbreviative, "Ginnie, darling! put your hand in mine! Ginnie! the world looks very different after such a day as this, to what it does in ordinary times. Ginnie, the gauds, and splendors, and dignities of life are nothing to the soul gone to his Creator to-day—they seem little worth to *me* now. Good hearts, true and warm affections, firm and honest principles and purposes, appear to me now of infinitely greater value. Ginnie!" he continued, after a thoughtful pause, "Ginnie, dearest! I wished to reunite the severed branches and estates of your family—I wished, foolishly—for the worldly distinction of yourself—to see you Lady Cliffe—*that* title, I am now nearly sure, belongs *of right* to another. You look surprised! you will understand, anon. Yes: that title belongs, in strict justice, to another, and if it *did not*—still, knowing what I know, feeling as I feel, I should not covet the dignity for *you*. I wish rather to consult my own conscience, and your happiness and welfare, in bestowing you, with my blessing, upon one of fixed principles and pure affections—one of whom you once truly said that he merited my preference above all others!" Then rising, feebly, from his chair, and still holding the hand of Virginia, he approached, and laid it in that of Mr. Carey, saying, "Joseph, will you have her?"

* * * * * *

What did Joseph do? what did he reply? I am not sure that I clearly recollect—I suppose that Mr. Carey said everything that was expected of him and was proper to be said—while it is not unlikely either that he might have said something very foolish, and that he ought not to have said—the most self-possessed and dignified persons are apt to do so on such occasions—*if they feel*—and, besides, the question was so sudden and embarrassing. "*Joseph, will you have her?*" Of course he would! Judge Washington knew that well enough when he asked the question—which *question*, I suspect, was a piece of polite compensation—a delicate apology for his long opposition and late consent—as though he had said—"Joseph, the child that I have so long withheld from you, I now give you an opportunity of refusing in your turn—which (*sotto voce*) I know you cannot do." No! I do not know, certainly, *what* Joseph said or did—but tradition runs that he held Ginnie's hand tightly within his own—(he need not have done so, Ginnie was not going to withdraw it)—raised his eyes to Judge Washington, and looked—"unutterable thoughts!"

The next morning, at breakfast, Judge Washington announced to his family his intention of setting out the next day for Boston, for the purpose of seeing his adopted daughter and ward, Magdalene Mountjoy, and also his intention of requesting Joseph Carey to take up his abode in the house for the protection of his girls during his short absence. After breakfast the circle separated, the Judge to seek Joseph and commence preparations for his journey, Virginia to indite a loving epistle to her sister, and Helen to write a letter to her brother.

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But something immediately occurred to change all their plans for the present, for no sooner had Judge Washington, after leaving the hall, closed the door behind him, and advanced into the street, than he met Adam Hawk coming to the house. Adam Hawk "all shaven and shorn," and wearing a look of stern satisfaction upon his countenance. No sooner had Judge Washington caught a sight of the *tout ensemble* of the old man, newly shaven, neatly dressed, leaning lightly upon his staff, and wearing that look of triumph, than the whole truth of Adam's mission to town flashed upon the Judge's mind.

"Well, Adam?" he said, eagerly.

"Well, sir, you see I am shaved!"

"Come in, old friend! Come in! You are weary! How far came you this morning?" inquired the Judge, stepping up the marble steps before him and opening the door.

"I left Prospect Plains day before yesterday, riding the mule Billy. He was tired out at the Cross Roads where I got to last night—so this morning, leaving him there to rest, I took my staff and walked on, and here I am."

"Eight miles on foot before breakfast! too much for you at your age, old friend! You must have breakfast before you tell me one word," said the Judge, who, though intensely anxious, was thoughtful for his old overseer's comfort. He took him into the dining-room from which the breakfast things were not yet removed, and set him down to the table, ringing for a servant to come and wait on him.

After breakfast, Judge Washington, followed by Adam Hawk, entered his study, where he remained closeted with his overseer all the forenoon. At dinner he met his family again, and changed the arrangement of the morning, in the respect that instead of going to Boston, he must, with all his household, set out immediately for Prospect Plains.

CHAPTER XVI.

RECONCILIATION

Let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive
In offices of love, how we can lighten
Each other's burden in our share of life.

Milton.

Gratitude—deep, fervent gratitude,—more than anything else, burned in Magdalene's heart, and glowed upon her countenance, as she lay hours, many long hours, with clasped hands and upraised glance, silent upon her bed—gratitude that her soul was delivered from the guilt of a great crime—gratitude to God only. This feeling so drew in and absorbed all other emotions and thoughts, that scarcely was she conscious of the deep devotion of Theodore Hervey to her service. While she would be thus wrapped in reverie, hour after hour would he sit patiently by her bedside, waiting until she noticed him, or anticipating her wants before she had expressed them. Little did Magdalene know how much her life was owing to the constant vigilance, the unremitting care of Theodore Hervey; how his anxiety for her recovery had endowed him with a sort of additional sense—a fine, subtle intuition, by which he at once perceived and averted any danger that might threaten—while he recognized and gathered about her every good influence that could benefit her.

Above all things he guarded her from agitations, and so well had he succeeded in warding off this particular peril, that she had been protected from the least cause of excitement, and so had suffered no recent outbreak of her fearful hemorrhage, and was now recovering her power of motion and speech.

After writing to Judge Washington, and waiting long enough to receive an answer, which owing to the multifarious occupations of that gentleman had not yet arrived, Mr. Hervey, in some expectation that the letter might be answered in person by some member of the family, had given orders that he himself should be first cautiously and secretly informed if any one came inquiring for himself or the sick lady, as it was positively necessary that she should not be agitated by a surprise.

One afternoon he was sitting with Magdalene, reading, for her amusement, from Mrs. Hemans's Poems. Magdalene was not now, as usual, absorbed in reverie, but giving him her whole attention, lying over on her side, with her face turned towards him, her eyes fixed on him full of earnest, fervent, grateful affection—while, with one hand, he pressed her waxen-like fingers, and with the other held the volume from which he read, looking extremely happy. He had been reading "The Sisters," "Our Daily Paths," "Christ Stilling the Tempest,"—finally he inadvertently read the title of another and a different style of poem, "Properzia Rossi."

"Yes, read *that*," murmured Magdalene. And as he read the lines of the text:

"Tell me no more, no more,
Of my soul's lofty gifts! are they not vain
To quench its haunting thirst of happiness?
Have I not loved, and striven, and failed to bind
One true heart unto me, whereon my own
Might have a resting place, a home for all
Its burden of affections? I depart,
Unknown, though Fame goes with me; I must leave
The earth unknown. Yet it may be that death
Shall give my name a power to win such tears
As would have made life precious."

He had read thus far, when a low sob attract-

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ed his attention. Ceasing, and turning to Magdalene, he saw her eyes full of tears, and her bosom heaving an instant only, and then the rising emotion was repressed, and with her habitual self control, she pressed his hand that held hers, and smiled on him faintly with clear eyes.

But that little betrayal of feeling was not lost on Hervey. Closing the book, he sank on his knees by her couch, only to bring himself nearer to her, and taking her hand between both his own, he looked at her some time without speaking; then he said,

"*Dear* Magdalene! *dear* Magdalene! if I could only make you happy—if I could only make you feel how dearer than all things else to me is your happiness. Magdalene! Magdalene! what can I do for you? *Your* 'soul's lofty gifts' have bound at least

> "'One true heart unto you, whereon your own
> Might find a resting place, a home for all
> Its burden of affections.'

Oh, Magdalene, if the gift of that heart could only give you peace—if its *immolation* could purchase happiness for you!"

Magdalene did not reply in words, but pressed his hands again, and looked at him with eyes full of grateful love.

Just at that moment the noise of some one approaching the door caused Theodore to resume his seat. It was the nurse, who reentered the room, and placed a card in Mr. Hervey's hand. Theodore looked at it and changed color. Magdalene turned her eyes on him with an expression of inquiry.

"A visitor, my dear Magdalene, whom I must see—that is all," he replied, and, rising, took her hand, pressed it, dropped it again, and left the room to go to his visitor in the parlor.

When Theodore Hervey entered the parlor, he immediately recognized the tall and distinguished looking individual who arose and advanced to meet him as Lord Cliffe. He instantly and cordially offered his hand, shook hands with his lordship, and entreated him to resume his seat, taking a chair at the same time himself. Then he expressed his pleasure at meeting with Lord Cliffe, hoped that he was well, and that he had left the Washingtons in good health. Lord Cliffe assured him that the family were in excellent health, and that he, himself, had quite recovered from the effects of his trifling wound. Had any light been thrown upon that dark subject? Theodore ventured to inquire. There had not—the whole subject remained enveloped in mystery—his own opinion was simply that his assailant had been some escaped bedlamite, Lord Cliffe replied; and then wishing to come at once to the subject of his visit, said—

"You have, of course, heard of the death of General Mountjoy."

"Yes—and I have been led to suppose that Judge Washington's intimacy with the family has constrained him to be very much engaged with them just now, and has prevented his replying to a letter of considerable importance written to him by myself last week—unless, sir, as I am inclined to hope, you bring a letter or a verbal reply or notice of some sort?" said Hervey.

"No—I do not bring either letter or message from Judge Washington, whom I left quite taken up, as you surmised, with the affairs of the funeral. Yet, nevertheless, my business to Boston is directly concerned with the subject of that letter."

"As—in what manner, sir?—may I be permitted to ask?"

"I must revert to the subject of General Mountjoy's death. By his last will and testament he acknowledged Magdalene Mountjoy as his grand-daughter—the legitimate daughter of his son, Victor Mountjoy, and with the exception of a few trifling legacies to his sister and neices, the Swans, he has left her the whole of his great estate, comprising three of the most valuable plantations in Virginia. He appointed Judge Washington and myself executors of his will, and in that character—Judge Washington being otherwise engaged—I have come to Boston to look after the condition and welfare of the heiress."

Theodore Hervey heard this at first with great surprise, and then his countenance became overcast with sadness. When Lord Cliffe ceased to speak and seemed waiting for a comment, he observed abstractedly,

"Yes, that was but just—I am glad for his sake that he did it. Yet if he had died intestate, the whole property would have been inherited by Magdalene, his legal heiress, because the marriage of Victor Mountjoy and Margaret Hawk was a fact that could be well proved, while there was no proof of General Mountjoy ever having made the *legal demur* that would at any time previous to the majority of the parties have annulled the marriage. The silence of the parent or guardian is held for consent—if this silence lasts up to the time of the majority of the parties, the marriage is fully legalized."

"Yes, sir," said Lord Cliffe, and then very anxious to hear of Magdalene, he inquired—"Where is the young lady now, and what is the present state of her health—does it admit the possibility of her receiving a visitor?"

"She is boarding at this house, where she has lived for years while in Boston. Her health has suffered cruelly, as I wrote Judge Washington. She is convalescent now—yet so completely prostrated, and withal so excitable, that her case is still so precarious as to require the utmost vigilance and care to keep her from any agitation

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that might be fatal. No, sir, I think that her state does not admit the visit of one who *must*, however involuntarily, awaken so many painful reminiscences as yourself."

Lord Cliffe looked fixedly on the face of Mr. Hervey, but reading there nothing new or strange, he asked—

"What do you mean by these expressions, Mr. Hervey?"

"You cannot, if you, as I suppose, have been made acquainted with the contents of my letter, you cannot be at a loss to know that it was the report of *your death* that nearly killed Miss Mountjoy—should you not reasonably suppose that the sight of you would agitate her greatly, in her weak state *fatally?*"

"Magdalene was not wont to be so weak!" said Lord Cliffe, with a spasm of remorse griping his heart.

"No—and yet she was very much attached to Virginia. You were on the eve of marriage with Miss Washington, and reported to have been murdered—I do not know that any great weakness was betrayed in this acute sympathy with what she supposed to be her sister's extreme anguish."

"Did Magdalene believe me to be on the eve of marriage?" asked Lord Cliffe, with a strange blending of pain, regret, and doubt in the expression of his fine countenance.

"I take it for granted that she *did*."

"Yet you do not *know* it—you never heard her allude to this reported marriage?"

"Never—still there can be little doubt that she knew all about it—the projected marriage was the subject of common rumor."

"Common rumor is proverbially mendacious—particularly so in this instance."

"Sir!"

"I was not on the eve of marriage with Miss Washington—I am not engaged to that young lady, and have no intention of ever being so."

"You surprise me, sir!"

"So I judge. But to change the subject—I *must* see Magdalene immediately, if possible"

"Lord Cliffe, I regret very much the necessity of repeating that it is *not* possible. Miss Mountjoy's state is too critical to permit the least chance of excitement—the least surprise might bring on a fatal relapse."

"In that state of affairs I must request a favor of you—that is, gradually and cautiously to prepare Magdalene for my visit—for, as soon as a due regard for her health will allow, I *must* have an interview with her. Come, sir, when shall I be able to see her?"

"I fear that several days—perhaps weeks, must first elapse, sir?" replied Theodore, coldly, for every moment he was more displeased with the deportment of his visitor.

"Several days!—a week!—that will not do! —that can scarcely be necessary. Who is Magdalene's physician?"

"The medical attendant of *Miss Mountjoy*," said Theodore, emphatically, and by his most respectful manner of naming that lady rebuking Lord Cliffe's familiar mode of designating her, "the medical attendant of *Miss Mountjoy*—is Doctor Warren."

"His address?" demanded his lordship, curtly.

"No. 3 Washington Street."

"I shall see him immediately upon this subject," said Lord Cliffe, rising, and reaching for his hat to go.

"One moment, my lord!" said Theodore Hervey, suddenly, impulsively, laying his hand upon Lord Cliffe's arm, and arresting his steps. "One moment!" and throwing his hand to his brow, he paused an instant, in deep, but rapid thought, as link after link of the "electric chain" of memory and of circumstances flashed upon his mind—revealing the most painful possibilities—*her* strange anguish—too great! yes, much too great to be excited for a mere friend, or the still further removed *betrothed* of a friend!—and then *his* familiar, and sometimes authoritative manner.—Were *they* betrothed lovers? Were *they*—the next thought was overwhelming—he turned sick and pale, reeled, held on to the back of the chair for support, while Lord Cliffe gazed at him in surprise and perplexity. "Your pardon, my lord!" said Theodore, recovering himself—"sit down! I myself can scarcely stand."

Lord Cliffe resumed his seat, and Theodore sunk into a chair.

"Well, Mr. Hervey?" said Lord Cliffe, to recall him to himself.

"Well, sir!"

"You detained me!—for some purpose, I presume?"

"Yes!" said Theodore, and again dropped his head upon his hands—but then quickly arousing himself with an effort, he proceeded to say—"Lord Cliffe, you are going to consult Doctor Warren, and it is likely that he will tell you that an interview with a casual visitor, on mere business, may not be dangerous to Miss Mountjoy's serenity, and therefore to her life. But you can best judge for yourself, whether you *are* nothing more than a casual visitor—whether your interview with her will be likely to disturb her quietude or not." He paused, in some embarrassment.

"To what does all this tend, Mr. Hervey?" inquired his lordship.

"Sir, I do not know what your relations with Miss Mountjoy have been, may be now, or are about to be—but *this* I *do* know—that if in your mutual experience there is any exciting circumstance likely to be brought to mind, during your intercourse with her—that interview would inevi-

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ably be fatal to her," and so, in his deep anxiety, Theodore truly believed. "You know best now, whether, even with the doctor's permission, you can visit Miss Mountjoy or not!"

Lord Cliffe remained quiet, and in profound thought for some time. Then he arose, and slowly and thoughtfully paced up and down the room. Finally, he resumed his seat, and said, earnestly—

"I *must* see Magdalene! To be within a few feet of her, and *not* to see her, is intolerable! I *must* see Magdalene! I must be introduced into her chamber while she sleeps, that I may gaze on her so! Do you *hear* me, Mr. Hervey?"

"I hear you, sir!"

"Yet you say nothing in assent! I tell you that I *must* and *will* see Magdalene!—do you mark!"

"Forgive me, Lord Cliffe, if, as Miss Mountjoy's oldest friend, I inquire by what right you demand this privilege?"

"I might, perhaps, merely cite a precedent in yourself! I might say that *you* have passed hours in watching by the sick bed of Magdalene! I might go farther, and demand upon what pretence *you* claimed the privilege of attendance upon her."

"And I should reply, my lord," said Theodore, as a dark flush rose to his brow—"I should reply—by the sacred privilege of old friendship, and of my holy cloth!"

"Oh! your holy cloth!" interrupted Lord Cliffe, with the first rude sarcasm he had ever indulged.

"Yes, sir! my holy cloth! however unworthy its present wearer may be—is a passport to the chamber of man, woman, or child, whose sufferings demand sympathy and relief. A minister's place is certainly by the sick-bed and the death-bed—thus it was—*and*—" added Theodore, with a faltering voice—"*because she had no other friend to care for her, I took the place!*"

As Lord Cliffe looked at him now, and noted the pale and hollow cheeks, and hollow eyes, and the slight fragile form, involuntarily contrasting it with his own vigorous and athletic figure—and as he thought of this frail and delicate man, so much needing rest and support himself, devoting himself day after day, and night after night, for many long weeks, with a perfect love, to the service of another—and when he thought how fruitless all this would be to him, and how soon the object of his pure love would be snatched from him—all acrid jealousy and unworthy anger melted from his heart, and he felt a good impulse to do what in the position of affairs was perfectly right—to confide the truth to this most estimable young minister. Perhaps in another hour Lord Cliffe would not have been governed by such an impulse. However, now he arose, and laying his hand most affectionately upon Theodore Hervey's shoulder, he said, in an earnest manner,

"Mr. Hervey! believe me, I am most profoundly and fervently grateful to you for your devotion to Magdalene. In *her* name, and in *my own*, I thank you most earnestly. By your devotion to her, you have very seriously impaired your own health, I fear. Now you must rest from your toil. And if you are superseded in your labor of love—think that it is only by one whose *duty*, as well as inclination, calls him to the post—" he paused.

"By Miss Mountjoy's *guardian*, perhaps you mean, sir!" said Hervey, without raising his head, as he leaned upon his hand

"By Lady Cliffe's husband."

As if he had been struck with death, Theodore turned ghastly white—his hands dropped, and his head fell back. Lord Cliffe raised one of those cold hands and pressed it earnestly, and then seeming not to notice his extreme distress, for he had great faith in his ultimate power of self-control—he went on to say—

"Yes, Magdalene is my wife. You were very justly surprised and offended, because I called her 'Magdalene'—and still 'Magdalene'—repeatedly—even after you had, by your example, emphatically rebuked me. The reason was, that I could not bear to call my wife by her maiden appellation. Theodore! hear me farther. We were married privately, at a village just out of Norfolk, more than four years ago. She spent a year in travelling over the Eastern continent with me—then, for causes not now necessary to repeat, we separated—I going to England—she, after a little while, returning here. Yet, Theodore, though we were married and lived together more than twelve months—yet there was a slight informality in the license that would—were either of us now disposed to use it for that purpose—render our marriage invalid. Do you attend to me, Mr. Hervey?"

"Yes! yes! I hear!"

"Well, then, what I wish is—my privilege of seeing my wife, of watching by her while she sleeps, of making my presence known to her as soon as it may be safe to do so."

"You are not now under the laws of Virginia! You are in Massachusetts now! You have *acknowledged, mind!* You have acknowledged *to me*, that this lady is your wife. That binds you! I will keep you to that!" said Theodore, emphatically—mindful of Magdalene's interests, though his own heart was breaking.

"My dear Hervey! you cannot do me a greater service! Nay, you shall bind me even faster! fast as State and Church *can* bind me! As soon as Magdalene is sufficiently convalescent to bear the scene, you shall unite us by the irrevocable rites of your own liturgy!"

"Yes! yes! that must be done! that must

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certainly be done! *I myself* must do it!" exclaimed Theodore, almost wildly, as he arose with the intention of leaving the room for some unknown purpose, but before he had advanced three steps towards the door, he reeled and fell!

Lord Cliffe sprang to him, raised him, bore him lifeless to the sofa, laid him there, and rang the bell for assistance.

Theodore Hervey was confined to his bed by extreme illness for a week. In the meantime, Lord Cliffe had conferred with the physician—telling him only so much of his story as he deemed strictly necessary—*much less* than he had imparted to Theodore Hervey—and obtained the right of entrance into the sick chamber. It was the afternoon of the same day, while Magdalene was sleeping, that he was admitted to see her. The room was very quiet and partially darkened, for the better repose of the patient. He entered, attended only by the nurse, who did *not* accompany him to the bedside. He approached with an awed manner and stealthy steps, to gaze upon the beautiful and unconscious sleeper! He bent over her. The sight of his Magdalene lying there, helpless, prostrate, unconscious—so pale, so very pale—the wan hue of her face made death-like by the contrast of her jet-black hair flowing down each side, and the jet-black eyebrows and eyelashes resting on her cheeks—the sight of her so beautiful even in ruins—awoke the deepest love of his soul; the deeper, stronger, more earnest and fervent for the remorse—the remorse that must have been very bitter, but for the purpose and hope of compensating all her past and present sufferings, and making her life happy. Yet, notwithstanding his predominating hopes, he gazed at her with an almost broken heart—for there was still uncertainty, doubt and fear—she was so fearfully changed:

Death itself,

> "Before Decay's effacing fingers
> Have swept the lines where beauty lingers,"

could scarcely produce a greater change!

Where was now that fine complexion, that firm elasticity of muscle, that grand contour of form, that great strength, which must have been repellant, but for its exceeding beauty, that glorious vitality which was the great charm and power of the wonderfully endowed woman?

Oh, gone, gone!

And what had destroyed such a wondrous work of the Creator? And what in earth or heaven could restore it?

All that was left now of that marvellous life and strength and beauty, seemed 'nothing but a magnificent ruin!

The deep groan that escaped his lips was an upheaving of the profoundest depths of his soul.

That groan disturbed the sleeper. She sighed in her sleep, and slightly moved one thin, transparent hand, as with an involuntary gesture of deprecation.

Lord Cliffe, fearing that she would awake, retired from the bedside.

Then he heard her move and murmur in a low tone—how the first soft sound of her voice thrilled upon his heart! She was awake—she spoke to the nurse, who immediately approached the bed.

Lord Cliffe retired from the room.

Again he sought the physician.

"*Can* she recover?"

"Yes, with careful nursing."

"I will nurse her myself—I will never leave her, except for her benefit; *will* she, *can* she be *fully* restored? Will she ever be her former self?"

"She has the finest constitution I ever met with in man, woman or child; but it takes years to repair such an injury as she has sustained—years of great care—"

"That shall be my work!—only tell me that years and care *can* restore Magdalene to her former glorious self, and, with that hope before me, years shall not weary my patience, nor care fatigue me in the task," said Lord Cliffe, forgetting, in the intensity of his emotion, his usual quiet and reserved manner.

He took up his abode at the hotel. Whenever Magdalene slept during the day, he took the nurse's place by her side—vacating it only when she moved as if about to awake.

The second day of Theodore Hervey's absence, just as he was leaving the room, he heard her ask for Mr. Hervey, and heard the nurse's evasive reply that he was confined to his lodgings by a slight indisposition. Thus a week passed on, when at last, one day, Lord Cliffe thought that his presence at her bedside had very nearly been discovered by Magdalene. It was in the middle of the day that she was sleeping, and he, as usual, sitting by her side. The shutters were closed, and even the heavy lined curtains let down, the more effectually to keep out the glare of the noonday sun. The room was, therefore, even darker than usual, but from having set there an hour, his eyes had become accustomed to the obscurity, and he could see things tolerably well. He sat gazing in mournful admiration upon the marble-like, majestic face, darkly shadowed by the magnificent sweep of ebon hair, when suddenly the long black eyelashes, resting so death-like upon the snowy cheek, began to quiver, and then the grand, profound, dark eyes were open, and gazing dreamily, mournfully, lovingly upon him!

He shrank into the shadow of the deep chair,

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and turning stealthily away, glided from the room, with her gaze haunting his vision—her gaze, full of vague, dreamy memory, love, compassion, deprecation—all blended in shadowy mysticism, like thoughts in sleep, or clouds at night. He paused at the door, but he was not recalled,—he heard no slightest disturbance, until he just caught her low tones inquiring calmly of the nurse whether she knew if Mr. Hervey were better, and the reply that he *was* better, and out, and that he was even then awaiting the end of her nap, to pay her a visit.

"Let him come in, then, soon," she murmured.

Then Lord Cliffe, congratulating himself that he had withdrawn before she had been sufficiently wide awake to recognize him, left the door, first with the thought of immediately seeking Mr. Hervey, and requesting him, during his approaching interview with Magdalene, to prepare her to receive his visit—but then, with a delicate consideration for Theodore's present condition and state of feeling, he governed his impatience and resolved to wait quietly until the next day.

He met Mr. Hervey in the parlor, and grasping his hand warmly, expressed the earnest gratification he felt at seeing him recovered.

Mr. Hervey thanked him, and inquired, with a composed manner, if he had just left Magdalene. Lord Cliffe replied in the affirmative.

"How has she been for the past week? how seems she now?"

"Still better, and mending daily. Her voice this morning was much stronger than it was the first day of my arrival."

"She has not been apprised of your arrival yet, sir?"

"No, though to-day—even now—she was very near discovering it, very unexpectedly," and Lord Cliffe related to him all that had occurred.

Theodore remained in silent thought a little while, and then said,

"Lord Cliffe, I will see Magdalene this afternoon, and judge of her condition. If I think it safe, I will cautiously apprise her of your presence in the house. It is better that it should be done as soon as possible. The shock of a *sudden* discovery, in her critical state, would inevitably be fatal, and of such a shock she is in continual danger while you watch her sleep. When once she knows that you are here, we have nothing more to fear—and she with her mind so perfectly at rest, must recover health and strength with great celerity. I can scarcely believe, however, in your having been so very near her for a week without her being in some measure already prepared to hear without great surprise, of your presence in the house. *That* one can imagine without being a convert to the belief in the subtile communion of spirits either! Yes! if her state will possibly permit it, I must tell her this afternoon.

"I thank you, Hervey! that is my desire! Yet I should not have asked it of you to-day!"

Theodore smiled a sad smile—that said as plain as words could speak—"The bitterness of death—hope's death, is already past! I have nothing new to suffer!"

Both were silent for a few minutes, and then Mr. Hervey repeated—"Yes! I will, if possible, tell her to-day—and then as soon as may be, after that—"

"You will re-marry us, by the ceremony of the Protestant Episcopal Church."

Again silence fell between them, and then Mr. Hervey extending his hand to the table beside him, gathered up some letters and papers that lay scattered there, and said—

"I have letters of much interest and importance, from Judge Washington—perhaps your lordship has received similar communications?"

"No, I have not lately heard from Judge Washington."

"I think then that you must hear from him soon, on very important business."

"I am not sure that Judge Washington is aware of my present address."

Mr. Hervey looked surprised at this observation, but made no comment.

"As you have alluded to the interest and importance of the Judge's communications, and hinted that they nearly concerned myself, may I be permitted to inquire into their nature?"

"Certainly, Judge Washington writes me that the funeral of General Mountjoy being over, he was about to reply to my communications concerning Magdalene, by hastening hither in person, the more especially as by the will of her grandfather, General Mountjoy, she was left the sole heiress of his estates, and he himself appointed executor. But—he goes on to say—just as he was about to set out for the North, he received sudden information of the arrest of the suspected assailant of your lordship in the vicinity of Prospect Hall, which has called him in haste to that neighborhood. I presume, sir, that as soon as your address is known to your friends, you will be called to appear and identify the man, if you have not already been summoned?"

"No, I repeat, I have heard nothing from Judge Washington, or from any one else in Virginia. This is my first knowledge of the arrest. I, myself, however, am fully impressed with the idea that my assailant was a madman. Such, I am certain, will, upon investigation, prove to be the truth. Has any new light been thrown upon this dark subject by the arrest? Does Judge Washington say?"

Theodore Hervey changed color, and replied in a low and solemn voice,

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"Yes. A very fearful light has been thrown upon a much darker and deeper crime long enveloped in mystery, a crime so black and so atrocious, that even at twenty years distance the soul shudders to recall its memory—the unprovoked and cruel destruction of the most lovely and loving, childlike, saint-like woman that ever lived on earth to give us faith in angels!"

"Mary Washington! You mean Mary Washington! But how—what—twenty years ago—twenty years between the acts—what can the two circumstances have in connection? Pray, explain yourself!"

"Your assailant and the long undiscovered murderer of Mary Washington, are supposed to be the same man—"

"And he—"

"Has been arrested, through the persevering vigilance of Adam Hawk, and is now in the county jail of ——— county."

"But his name—his motive—who is he?—What in the name of God could have been his motive?—if, indeed, all this is not an error, as I really think it must prove to be. *My* assailant—I repeat it emphatically—was a lunatic."

"Lunatic he might have been when he assailed you—no lunatic, I imagine, when he destroyed Mary Washington."

"But his name—who is he?"

"A fugitive slave of the late Colonel Carey, who absconded from his master's plantation more than twenty years ago, who was supposed to be dead, but who has, in reality, been a vagabond and a wanderer on the earth with the mark of Cain upon his brow. Circumstances have lately transpired that have resulted in this discovery of his life, and his crimes, and in his arrest."

"But his purpose! his purpose in the fiendish act?"

"VENGEANCE!"

"Against whom?—not the sweet, gentle and child-like woman he destroyed—not against me, who never injured him!"

"AGAINST A FAMILY—against all who bore the name of CAREY. It is one of those awful instances of demoniac passion, of hellish malignity that can only boil forever in the lava-like MIXED BLOOD—in the volcanic bosom of a MULATTO!"

"But this grows more and more inexplicable—how is it possible that the humane and upright Colonel Carey, or any of his estimable family, could have provoked such a fiendish spirit of hate and revenge?"

"It is a very revolting story—I recollect having heard it when a boy, and its having made a very painful impression upon me at the time. Corporeal punishment is of very rare occurrence on the plantations in my native section of country. It has never been allowed to take place on Judge Washington's estate. It has never, except in one single instance, been resorted to on Colonel Carey's plantation. Then it was inflicted without the orders and even without the knowledge of the master in his absence; and was an abuse of delegated authority by the then new overseer, Adam Hawk, a man proverbial for sternness and harshness of disposition and character; and the subject of the disgraceful punishment was Abram Pepper, a young mulatto slave of Colonel Carey's. In his superintendence of the farm hands, Adam Hawk was severe, but generally just. He appears to have had little difficulty, however, in the management of the negroes, except in the case of this young mulatto who was of a very insubordinate temper. One day during the absence of Colonel Carey in Richmond, in busy harvest times, the plantation being left under the exclusive care of the new overseer, Abram Pepper refused to go to work. Adam Hawk sternly ordered him off to the field. Abram, with an oath, swore that he would not go. The overseer enraged, threatened. The negro in a fury defied him to do his worst. A very violent and disgraceful scene ensued, which was ended by Adam Hawk, who, with his accustomed, prompt severity of measures, did a thing that had never before degraded the domestic government of Colonel Carey's household—inflicted the punishment of the lash upon the culprit. When overpowered, the mulatto no longer resisted, but submitted with a dogged resignation. He went to his work—he never used a threat—never spoke a word—dined with the hands as usual—went to work in the afternoon—supped with them—went to bed. No one suspected him of his immediate intention of running away, or of his darker, deeper purpose of vengeance. The next morning, however, he was missed from his post, and though every possible search on the premises and throughout the neighborhood was made for him, he was never afterwards seen upon the plantation. The third day after his flight, Colonel Carey returned home and heard of the insubordination of his servant, of the unprecedented punishment inflicted by his overseer, of the flight of the mulatto, and finally of the exceeding great unpopularity of Adam Hawk, by reason of all this. Colonel Carey summoned his overseer to his presence—heard *his* statement of the affair—and then paid him his salary up to the end of the year, and dismissed him from his service, giving as his reason that he could not conscientiously retain in authority over his people a man who had abused his power by such a loathsome act of severity, and who, in consequence of that act, had become an object of such strong and natural aversion to the people over whom he had ruled. Subsequently hearing that Judge Washington was in want of an overseer, and not wishing that Adam Hawk, and es-

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pecially his wife, who was the nurse of his only daughter, should suffer want from the loss of his situation, Colonel Carey sought Judge Washington, and after telling him the cause of Adam Hawk's dismissal from his own service, strongly recommended him as a very efficient manager. Finally Judge Washington, premising that no such abuse of power would be tolerated on his premises, engaged Adam Hawk. But this is slightly apart from the main subject of my account—*Abram Pepper*. Years after this occurrence, when the mulatto was supposed to be lost or dead, Captain Carey, the only son of Colonel Carey, was waylaid and murdered, no one could surmise by whom. Not a soul *then* suspected that the long missing mulatto was, in the least, concerned in the crime. His death, you have already heard, broke Colonel Carey's heart—he did not survive the loss of this only and much beloved son two months. A year and a half from that time the young, beautiful and most amiable Mary Washington, the only daughter and sole remaining child of Colonel Carey, was mysteriously assassinated. Still no one, except one negro who kept silence, suspected the mulatto—how, indeed, should they? He had used no threats before his flight, and now he was quite forgotten. All the efforts of the police to discover the assassin were vain. Judge Washington, you remember, unable to bear the painful associations of Prospect Plains, removed with all his family to his new plantation on Sunny Isle. There his family continued to reside for ten years, he himself coming and going between the Island and the mainland as his duty or inclination called him. I think that under Providence it is chiefly attributable to her residence on the Isle, that Virginia escaped falling a victim to this secret and deadly hatred against her whole family."

Here the further speech of Theodore Hervey was interrupted by the entrance of Magdalene's nurse, who announced that her patient was awake, and waiting to receive Mr. Hervey.—Theodore immediately arose, bowed to Lord Cliffe, and followed the woman up stairs.

When Mr. Hervey entered the chamber, he found Magdalene sitting up in an easy chair, looking so much better, that he started with a sudden emotion of surprise and pleasure.

She held out her hand to him, smiling most affectionately. And, oh! as that old familiar smile beamed upon him, his heart stood still, his brain reeled! He recovered himself, and going to her, took her offered hand, answered her smile with another smile, and said, in tones calm, because they were very low,

"I am so glad to see you up at last, my dear Magdalene! Is this the first time you have risen?" and as he asked this question, he drew a chair to her side, and seated himself in it.

"No—yesterday I arose for the first time, and sat up an hour in the forenoon—this morning I sat up an hour, and I am just up now for the second time to-day. To-morrow I hope to be able to sit up all day. Dear friend, I am getting well fast. But *you*, Theodore!—you have been ill! Your looks show that, indeed! What has been the matter?—and how are you now? Quite restored, I hope?"

Magdalene spoke in a low, slow, even voice, such as she might indulge in with safety.

Theodore paused a moment, with his hand before his brow, and then replied,

"My head has been affected—I am better now. But we will talk of yourself, dear Magdalene; how have you been employed here in your sick room during the week of my absence?"

A strange smile passed over Magdalene's countenance—she passed her hand before her brow, and replied, slowly,

"In reveries, dreams, visions."

"Your childhood's habits recurring, Magdalene?"

"No, not exactly. Yet those childhood's visions and presentiments—great God! how nearly they had been fulfilled!" exclaimed she, shuddering, and turning paler than before.

"What do you say, Magdalene?"

"Nothing! I mean—I am confused!—something that I will tell you, perhaps, some day.—When I can bear it—when I can bear it! But, Theodore, I believe in presentiments—though not as the credulous generally accept them."

"How, dear Magdalene?"

"I believe that some orders of mind in some of their own peculiar phases, have the power of perceiving—vaguely, it may be—mystically, it may be—as through a glass darkly, the shadows of the mighty things in the far off future. I think that these sudden shades of indefinable melancholy, 'that overcome us like a summer cloud,' may indeed be cast by something in the unknown and distant future. But, in this respect, my faith in presentiments differs from that of others. I think they arise as *warnings*, not as prophecies. They do not indicate an irreversible doom—they point out dangers in the dark, unseen future—dangers that we may pray against and strive against—dangers that God may avert. You will smile that I should be reasoning upon that which is commonly regarded as the merest superstition—so, however, *I* never did regard it. *I believe presentiment to be a more refined and certain perception of undeveloped* PROBABILITIES, and not prophecies of predestined, immutable fate. All my childhood's years, Theodore, were darkened by a fearful presentiment—arising, I know, from a profound, inherent, UNDEVELOPED SELF-KNOWLEDGE—akin to prophecy—and oh, my God! how nearly it had been fulfilled! The

shadow of the cloud that has since broken over my head! But the storm has passed—the darkest peril is over!"

She paused from weariness or thoughtfulness, while Theodore held her hand and watched her countenance. That anxious examination was satisfactory; he saw that she was, indeed, very much stronger,—he thought that she might soon bear to hear the communications he had to make; but to win her away from the grave, even gloomy subject of her thoughts, he said,

"You say your lonely reveries and dreams of the past week have been unlike those of your childhood? I think, judging from your improvement, they have been more pleasant."

Magdalene raised her eyes to him with a smile, and said,

"Yes! I will even tell you all about it. Do you know that for a week past, I have been the victim of an *optical illusion?* And one of so agreeable a nature, that, like a pleasant dream, or rather a succession of pleasant dreams, its effect upon me has been restorative."

Theodore started, a light of the truth concerning this optical illusion flashed into his mind.—Magdalene, watching him, continued,

"Yes—is it not singular? I suppose it is my long, long illness, and the state of my nerves, that has caused this pleasant illusion,—for it is, oh! very, very satisfying, though it *is but* an illusion!"

"Well, dear Magdalene?"

"I am going to tell you. I had a friend—a very dear friend—a bosom friend—another self—I had an unhappy feud with this friend of my soul—a feud that drove me mad for years. Lately I heard that he had met a violent death—it was that which caused my severe illness! Then I heard it contradicted—he lived—and it was *that* which caused my recovery! Since that, I have lain and dreamed of seeing my friend, as the bereaved dream of the dead alive!—for I knew that I should never see him again in the flesh—a gulf, deep and dark as death, separates us. Well, but think! the last day you were here—the day upon which you were reading Mrs. Hemans's Poems to me, you recollect?—a week ago it was—I fell into a light slumber late in the afternoon, and after a little while, awaking, I saw, as plainly as if he had really been there, my friend sitting by me, gazing, with eyes full of affection, upon me—and as I moved, the vision glided away! Well, every day at about the same hour, I have, in awaking from sleep, seen the same vision. To-day, at noon, I took a nap. I awoke, and there was the vision—and there it remained longer than usual."

"And you think this was really an *optical illusion*, Magdalene?"

"Of course it was—imaginative as I am, I do not believe it to have been his spirit; besides—look at the period at which the vision always presented itself, just at the moment of my awakening, in the '*chiara obscura*' of blended dream and reality, and in the darkened room—and then it ever vanished as the last shadows of my sleep departed."

"Yet you say this 'illusion' was so *satisfying!* Are mere illusions *ever* really satisfying?"

"Oh, yes! do you not know that?"

She was far from suspecting the truth yet. He arose and drank off a draught of cold water, he wished to be perfectly cool and steady, lest his agitation might be infectious—he resumed his seat by her side, took her wrist, and with his finger on her pulse, said—

"Magdalene, was there no possibility that the supposed optical illusion might have been a reality?" The pulse bounded, stopped. Magdalene grew deadly pale, bent forward, clasped his arm, and gazed at him intently. He continued—"Was there no possibility, I say, that the supposed vision might have been some loving watcher of your slumbers, who, to prevent surprising and disturbing you, glided away on your first symptoms of awakening?" Her gaze became so intense, her cheek so white, that he felt he must relieve immediately the suspense that was now more dangerous than the full information could be. "Magdalene, your vision was a reality—Lord Cliffe is in Boston; he is in this house; he has been your frequent daily watcher for a week past. It was really him—and not an image conjured up by half-sleeping fancy."

Magdalene's hold relaxed upon his arm, her hands fell, her eyes closed, and she sank back in her chair overcome, but not swooning. Theodore sprank to the table, poured out a glass of water, and putting his hand at the back of her neck, raised her head, and placed the water to her lips. She drank a little, and waved the glass away. He set it down and returned to her.

"Tell me more!" she said.

And Theodore resuming his seat, said—"He came here a week ago, Magdalene. Do you not recollect that the last day I was with you, previous to my sickness, a card was brought me, and I left the room?"

"Yes—yes!"

"It was Lord Cliffe's card, and I found him awaiting me in the parlor. He had recently heard of your residence in Boston, and of your illness. He had come here seeking you. Magdalene, dearest, he made me understand his right of admission to your apartment." Magdalene's brow crimsoned—and Theodore hastened to add—"He told me of your secret marriage at a village near Norfolk, and of your making the tour of Europe together."

"He told you that!" exclaimed Magdalene, bitterly, covering her face with her spread hands.

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"Yes, dear Magdalene! he saw that I was your friend, even unto death, if needful—and he knew that he could confide in me, and saw that it was besides unavoidable. I should have prevented his seeing you otherwise, and so he told me that you were his *wife*—if you consented to be so, for that otherwise there was an informality in the marriage ceremonies, by which you were united, that might be used to annul the marriage."

"He said *that*," said Magdalene, with a deep joy breaking up through the conflicting emotions of her bosom—and irradiating her countenance a moment—and then her brow grew overcast, as she thought within herself—"Yes! but when he knows *all, all!* that I have to confess—how that it was *my* revenge that armed the assassin against his life—so nearly lost then—how then? Oh, at least I shall see him—yes—soon! and on his bosom pour out this story of passion, guilt, suffering, and pray for forgiveness!" then in a trembling voice, she asked—"Theodore, when shall I see him?"

"Just as soon as you are strong enough—I mean sufficiently composed to bear the interview."

"*Now*, then! Let it be *now*, Theodore! for I shall grow more agitated every moment that I wait. Give me a glass of water—and—thank you."

She received the glass from his hand, drained it off, returned it to him, and said—

"Theodore—*no*—no hasty, impertinent message from *me to him*—such would ill become me! Go to Lord Cliffe, Theodore, and let him know that I wait here to receive him at his own best convenience."

She looked so pale, so meek, so unlike her former self, yet withal, so beautiful, that he could have fallen at her feet and worshipped her. He dared not trust himself to look upon her a single moment longer. He hastened from the room to do her bidding.

Magdalene remained seated in the arm-chair, with her hands clasped and her face bowed, as in prayer.

A few minutes passed so, and then the door swung rapidly open, and Lord Cliffe entered the room.

She heard his footstep, and raised her head to look once more upon that old, familiar, fondly-loved form and face.

His form was majestic and graceful as ever, but his face was pale, and his countenance eloquent with profound emotion. And oh! at the first sight of his living self, all her old, fond, half-lost affection rushed back in a tumultuous flood of overwhelming tenderness and joy, and with a sudden, overmastering impulse she started up, and threw herself upon his bosom. He caught her in his arms—pressed her to his heart, and kissed her pale lips and paler brow many times. And she wept convulsively on his shoulder—her whole frame heaving and shuddering—No word was spoken for some time, until at length he whispered—

"Magdalene—you *have* forgiven me—you have already forgiven me—I know and feel it, dear,—but—tell me so!"

She attempted to reply, but sobs choked her utterance. She essayed once more to answer, but failed.

He pressed her closer to his bosom, and murmured, soothingly—

"Magdalene! dearest Magdalene! do not try to speak, yet, then. Weep on, love! weep on! it will do you good. Shed all your tears, and let them be the last you shall ever have to shed."

She trembled so much that he seated her upon the lounge, and keeping his arms around her, rested her head against his breast. Again she endeavored to speak, and in a voice frequently interrupted by sobs, she exclaimed—

"Oh! Clinton, if you *knew all*—if you *know all!* I have a confession to make, that may—oh! that *must* separate us again and forever!" And choking sobs again arrested her farther speech.

I know not what dark suspicion crossed the mind of her lover—it was not the right one—for his countenance changed, but he governed himself, and replied—

"Magdalene! do not speak another word until you are more composed."

"Yes! yes! I *must*, for until you set upon my brow the kiss of forgiveness—if that can be—every other kiss *burns!*" And in impassioned and agonized tones, she poured out the whole terrible story of her heart's life for the past four years—its ambition—its love—its jealousy—despair—revenge—remorse!

He heard the whole horrible story through—supporting her head on his bosom all the time. At its close he folded her closely to his heart—and parting the dark hair from her brow—he pressed his lips there, saying—

"This is the kiss of—*reconciliation*—the other word is inadmissible from me to you, my Magdalene. For the rest we have both sinned against God—let us ask 'forgiveness' of Him."

"God may forgive me! but how can you?'

"Dear Magdalene, your anger—"

"Oh! I was not angry!—I had not that excuse."

"Your hatred, then, was very just!—and I had only to *be* just to disarm all your vengeance. Let us talk no more of it! Merciful God! it was I, by sin, that led you to this precipice of fearful guilt."

Both were silent for a little while to compose themselves, and gain that habitual self-control

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for which each was distinguished. Lord Cliffe passed the whole afternoon in her room—leaving it at last, only at the nurse's command, who insisted that her patient had set up too long. Upon leaving Magdalene, Lord Cliffe sought Theodore Hervey, whom he found engaged in replying to Judge Washington's letters.

The next morning Magdalene and Clinton were united in marriage, according to the forms of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Theodore Hervey performed the ceremony, and the attendant physician and his wife witnessed the marriage.

After it was over, Theodore took leave of the parties, and, in company with Dr. and Mrs. Warren, left the hotel. He would gladly have absented himself from Magdalene's society from that day forth, but fearing to disturb her peace with a suspicion of his deep sufferings—with his habitual spirit of self-devotion, he visited her as usual.

From this day Magdalene rapidly gained health and strength. A week passed away, and Lord Cliffe began to talk of their removal to Richmond, where he wished to see Judge Washington again, and to settle some business, previous to going to Europe, when one morning an event occurred that for the present changed his plans. They were sitting together in the parlor —Magdalene, Lord Cliffe, and Theodore Hervey —when the door was thrown open, and Judge Washington, Virginia, and Mr. Carey were announced, and entered the room. Lord Cliffe and Mr. Hervey arose to meet their visitors—but Virginia flew to Magdalene, and throwing her arms around her neck, burst into tears of joy.— How long she would have wept I do not know, but that Magdalene, kissing her cheek, gently seated her in the easy-chair, and disengaged herself.

Magdalene then turned to give her hand to her husband, who was standing by her side, and who now presented her to Judge Washington as his wife, Lady Cliffe.

Judge Washington's brow grew dark and severe, and he receded a step—this was involuntary—inevitable—it was an impulsive start of his nature—it was but for a moment—then reaching his hand, he took that of Magdalene, and in a tone and with a manner more grave and earnest than lively—wished her and her husband much happiness.

Mr. Carey next came up, and shaking hands with Magdalene, congratulated her upon her recovery.

They then sat down, and conversation was becoming general, when the chamber-maid entered to show Miss Washington to her room, to which her baggage had been carried, in order that she might change her dress. Magdalene, at Virginia's desire, accompanied her to her chamber.

When they were gone, Judge Washington requested the favor of a private interview with Lord Cliffe, and the two gentlemen retired to another room. Then Judge Washington informed his lordship that the object of his errand to Boston had been, not only to bring his ward home to Prospect Plains, but also to entreat Lord Cliffe to come immediately to the same place, in order to be in readiness to identify the man who had been arrested on the suspicion of having assaulted him, and who was now in the county jail. Finally, he begged to know, in the event of his lordship's agreeing to the proposed visit, how soon he could conveniently set out for Virginia.

Lord Cliffe replied that he himself would be ready at any time, but that he must consult the welfare of his wife, whose very recent recovery might not be sufficiently confirmed to admit of her immediately taking so long and fatiguing a journey.

In the meantime—while Judge Washington and Lord Cliffe were conversing in one room—and Magdalene and Virginia were *tete-a-tete* in another—Joseph Carey and Theodore Hervey were renewing their intimacy in the parlor. Theodore Hervey had always looked pale and grave, and now a slight additional pallor and gravity excited no surprise in the mind of his friend, who was too happily engaged in his own beatitudes to be over observant and solicitous where no cause of distress was suspected. So Joseph Carey informed Theodore Hervey of all his love —first of its hopelessness—its deathlessness—its long trial, and finally, its triumph and its exceeding great reward—dwelling with unconscious cruelty upon his own great happiness. Theodore wished him joy with all his soul, but after a little while, said—

"But, Joseph!—how about your missionary station—and when are you going to be married?"

Mr. Carey replied that he could answer both questions at once:—

That he had returned to America for the purpose of arousing by means of a series of lectures and sermons, the interest of the Christian community in behalf of the Indian Missions—that it was his intention to go out to India and return to his charge in the Spring—that Virginia would remain only his betrothed during her grandfather's life—for that he could not marry Virginia and *leave* her, neither could he take her from her grandfather in his extreme old age. That she and himself had agreed upon this—that they were not unhappy about it—that they had no doubts or fears, either concerning each other, their future union, or God's blessing.

This Joseph Carey declared with a spirit as sincere as it was cheerful.

But Theodore Hervey caught his hand, and clasping it, said—

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"Oh, Joseph!—you and Virginia, long and fondly attached as you are! and having her grandfather's consent to your immediate marriage—you can both agree to separate, and put a hemisphere between your two selves for an indefinite number of years, and only that she may devote all her youth to an old man's infirmities?"

"We both think it is right," said Joseph Carey.

Theodore Hervey remained silent and thoughtful for a few minutes, and then he said—

"Joseph! I have a proposition to make you! Do not misunderstand me, but agree to it, if you possibly can! Joseph! for years I have felt a call to missionary labor. I have been unfaithful because one selfish human passion possessed my soul, and governed it! I am punished! Through that passion I have been wounded almost unto death! You saw that woman who just left the room with Virginia? Joseph! I have some religion—or some *name* of it!—but, Joseph, I loved that woman more than God's service—for her I might have betrayed the Kingdom of Heaven! Well, Joseph! last week!—yes, a week ago today—I married that woman to another man! Look at me! Let me go in your place, Joseph! Let me take your pastoral charge in India, and do you marry Virginia, remain here, and do all you can in this country, and among this people, for the cause of Foreign Missions. Agree to this, Joseph! It is sudden, but it is wise and best; you will think so, when you have reflected upon it. For myself, I earnestly desire to go,

"'If Heaven will take
A heart that earth has crushed.'"

After the first start of surprise—the first look of intense sympathy—Joseph Carey listened calmly and attentively; but when Theodore ceased speaking, he dropped his head upon his chest in deep thought, and did not immediately reply.

"What do you think of my proposition, Joseph?" asked Theodore, after a pause.

"I think *this*, dear friend! that we must each of us have a week or two of strict self-examination, prayer, and cool reflection, before we speak again upon this subject, far less to come to any conclusion."

Here their farther conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Virginia and Magdalene, who were soon also joined by Judge Washington and Lord Cliffe.

Virginia had already informed her sister of the proposition of Judge Washington, and though now his office as the protector of his adopted daughter and ward was superceded by the higher and stronger claim of another to that title, yet Virginia had urged and entreated Magdalene to offer no opposition to the plan, but consent to go with them to Prospect Hall.

In a subsequent interview between Lord Cliffe and Magdalene, they agreed to accept this invitation to Prospect Hall, and made known their decision to Judge Washington.

In four days from this time the whole party set out for Virginia and Prospect Hall, whither, by a few hours, we must precede them.

CHAPTER XVII.

CORAL AND PRINCE.

And the crush'd beetle feels a pang
As great as when a hero dies. *Pope.*

I am not sure about the meaning of the above couplet, even if I have quoted it aright, which is doubtful—but its application to our present chapter is palpable. For while we have been interesting ourselves with the loves and fortunes of a pair of lovers, whose troubles were all created—not by hard-hearted parents and guardians—but by the evil in their own "undisciplined hearts," we have treated with thorough neglect an humble couple, who loved more disinterestedly, faithfully, and constantly, and who, for no faults of their own, were divided by a cruel misunderstanding for nearly twenty years—Coral and Prince.

It was a fine, clear, genial winter day, "the air was still, and the water still," and the sun warmly bright—one of those days that visit our climate in the midst of winter—a June day in January, but for the leafless forest—when old Adam Hawk walked up to Prospect Hall with an open letter in his hand, and calling for the housekeeper—Coral Pepper *vice* Polly superannuated—informed her that the letter he held in his hand was from Judge Washington, and announced that he would arrive at home with a party of guests that evening, and requested that everything might be in readiness for their reception. Having given this information, old Adam Hawk turned about and marched off. Adam went from the house directly to the stables, where he ordered the coachman to have the capacious family carriage got in readiness, and to drive to Heathville to meet his master. After completing these arrangements, Adam Hawk turned to go home, but was met by a messenger from the jailor at St. Leonards, who brought an urgent request that, if Judge Washington had not yet returned, *he* himself would come with all possible haste to the jail, for that his prisoner was at the point of death, and wished to see him with the purpose, it was thought, of making a full confession. Without waiting a moment, Adam Hawk turned his steps immediately to

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wards St. Leonards. Coral re-entered the house immediately, and assembling all the house-maids and waiters, gave her orders—dispatching two of the former to open and air the bed-chambers, change the bed linen, and lastly to light fires, so that the rooms might be gradually and thoroughly warmed—and sent two of the latter to take off the brown holland covers in the saloon, to fill and trim the lamps, light fires, etc.,—and finally, she went herself into the pantry and still-room, where, with several assistants, she commenced the interminable labor of preparing a Virginian supper for company—for there was a ham, a round of beef, and some tongues to be boiled early, so as to give them time to get cold for *slicing*—then there were several kinds of bread, and of cake, that required time in the rising and baking—to say nothing of what came after—a turkey to be roasted, ducks to be baked, chickens to be boiled, oysters to be stewed &c., &c., &c.

In fact, a Virginian supper for company, in no way differs from a dinner for a like occasion, except in the *absence* of wine and of vegetables, and the presence of tea and coffee.

It was about six o'clock in the evening, when every preparation was complete, except the lighting up. The table was set out in very handsome style in the dining-room. The fires were glowing in parlors and in chambers. Every man and maid was at his or her post, and Coral was only waiting to hear the clock strike six, before lighting the chandeliers.

She was standing in a moody attitude before the glowing hickory fire in the wainscoted parlor, when she heard a step near her, and looking around, saw her old friend Prince. She gave a little start, and then she held out her hand, and shook hands with him.

"I suppose master has arrived, Prince—I must make haste and light the lamps."

"No, the carriage is five mile ahind yet—the Judge sont me on a-horseback afore, for fear his letter hadn't arriv'. Let me light the lamps, Corry."

Coral thanked him, and when the illumination was complete, he turned around to take a view of his lady-love, and with a tragi-comic look of mingled deprecation, entreaty and reproach, said,

"Come, Corry! *do* come! It's so hard, so it is, that I'm been waiting twenty odd year, and now our dissunderstandment is all brought to light, and my innocense is a shining like a star at noon-day, and is as white as the driven lamb, you should keep on a being so dissrational!"

"Hush, Prince. Let me alone. Don't be foolish. Go and see ef the fire is burning in master's room, and turn his clean clothes that are airing on the chair."

"But, Coral, chile, indeed this here is very unkind—jes take a 'sideration on to it, chile! Here is I been waitin' on you twenty odd years—"

"You might a' married any time, I didn't hinder of you, Prince!"

Jes hear to her! She talks to *me* jes as if I wur as onprinciple as a white man! *Me* leave you! no, Coral—Prince William Henry thinks more of hisself than that! You may 'pulse me, and 'pell me, and 'spect me wrongfully, as you *has* been a doin' of, an' you might trample on me, and beat me, and kick me, as—meteorlogically speaking, you *has* been a doin' of—but it ain't no good! I keep on a lovin' of you same as ever, an' even *samer*—there ain't no dog on marster's plantation no more faithfuller than what I am! and that sayin' of a great deal! and *you* 'spicionin' of me so bad all along."

"I'm sorry I 'spected of you, Prince, 'deed I am! but 'deed you did wrongfully, 'deed you did, Prince, in not lettin' on 'bout *your own* 'spicions of *him!* 'deed you did, Prince. It made you look so guilty to them as loved you well enough to see your looks. It made *me* 'spect you, an' it 'mos' broke my poor heart, 'deed it did, Prince!"

"Now you sees how it was."

"No I don't, Prince! I sees how everybody ought for to do 'cisely right."

"But I *did* do right! How could I be sure *how* it was! and—"

"Hush, Prince! Hush, Prince! you sha'n't stan' there a 'fendin' of yourself when you ought for to be 'pentin' in sack cloth an' ashes. I sez agin, it's everybody's dooty to shet theer eyes and do 'cisely right without ever lookin' to see what's gwine for to be the end of it!"

"But let me 'xpound and 'xplain to you how it wur, Corry?"

"It's no use, Prince! You've 'xpounded and 'xplained over an' again, and the more you 'xpound and 'xplain the more worser I can't help thinkin' of it!"

"That wasn't a ca'se I haddent the right on my side, but a ca'se I wur an undeffunt bad lawyer—but ef you'll on'y hear me argafy the subjec' and 'scuss the 'scussion over again—"

"It's not a bit o' use, Prince."

"I *will* speak! So jes listen, Corry! I know your oldest half-brother."

"Don't keep calling of him my half-brother—he was none of my mother's chile, an' so I don't 'blieve he was any kin to me at all. I feel like I knew he *wa'n't*. I could a'most stake my mortal soul on it! No one as had a drop o' the same blood as I have in their veins could 'a been such a—oh! such a—I don't know *what* name is bad enough! Sometimes I doubts he was a human at all. Sometimes I thinks he must 'a been an evil sperit in the body of a man!"

"That you may 'pend upon it he *was*, Coral. All of us is either good sperits, or bad sperits, or

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jack indeffunt sperits in the human form at las' and no mir'cle either—but I wur sayin' that I known Abram well! better nor anybody else! I known him when a chile he'd hole' the madness in his heart for months an' months together, an' never let on 'till he got a chance to spite them, as he was mad 'long of. So when I heern how he wur treated of—bad enough—that I gree' to!"

"Yes! but that was not the fault of my dear, angel young mistress, who he 'stroyed so innocen'."

"No more it wa'n't—but it wur the fault of that bloody minded ole Adam Hawk, her father's overseer!—an' spite is blind and crazy as a mad dog, and it 'll tear to pieces one person jes soon as another. Well! as I was a sayin' of—don't keep on interruptin' me—when I heern how he'd been treated of, and how he'd runned away, I said to myself how he'd never res' 'till he'd spited the fam'ly. *I* wur nothin' more an' a b'y then myself, and you wur a little gal-chile, an' neither of us had thought 'bout keepin' company 'long o' one another. Well, so as years went by an' nothin' more was heern tell o' Abram, an' as I had courtin' an' other 'portant business to 'tend to, it was nat'ral 'nough that he should o' 'scaped out'n my memorandum, an' so he *did 'plstely* 'till when Marster Cap'n Carey wur laywaid an' 'stroyed, and nobody couldn't tell by whom, I thought 'bout Abram and his spiteful ways, an' then, Coral, the first 'spicion came into my heart, an' it made me so onhappy and so oneasy I didn't know what too do. Sometimes I thought how it was my duty to let on 'bout my thoughts, an' sometimes I thought how it wa'n't, ca'se, you see, arter all, I had no foundation to go 'pon but my own 'spicions—an' finally it wore an' tore 'pon my min' so, that every time I heern Cap'n Carey mention' it turn'd me right sick, an' you noticed of it, an' you 'gan for to 'spect me o' knowin' somethin' 'bout it, an' you cooled off from me. Meantime that 'tack was made on Miss Mary, an' then, Coral, you actilly turned ill, an' that made *me* worse, for, Coral, 'deed an' 'deed I never *did* 'spect Abram of *that* 'normous wickedness! I didn't, indeed—'sides which, you know, I had no reason to do it. I hadn't heern anything o' Abram for years gone past—'deed I thought mor' it wur a chance shot fired by some sportsman gentleman, 'deed I did! an' so did everybody else, an' even Miss Mary herself."

"Yes! for what did she—the dear angel! know of such wickness?"

"Well, Coral, a short time after that, when—I can't 'call the day, the black day, without a chill—well I say—when dear Miss Mary fell a sacrifice to that devil's spite."

"And to *your* want of courage."

"No, no! no, no! *not* that! 'fore my heavenly Judge I *never* 'spected him of any design ag'inst Miss Mary. Well, but arter that, I suffered horrible! 'deed I did, Coral! without your castin' of me off intirely as you did! Yes, I suffered horrible! for the 'spicion wore on my heart, an' it wore on it 'till I was almos' crazy. If there had 'a been the least *bit* of evidence beyant my own feelin', I'd a known what to do, but there wur nothin' but my own instinctorative feelin', an' that might a' been all a 'stake o' mine! an' the notion might o' been put into my head by Sam—an' for me to go an' cast a 'spicion on your brother, Coral, and fetch a 'grace on your fam'ly, and break your heart well as I loved you!—it seem like it wur onpossible—elsewise I had had more light an' I had—an' then a harberin' of the evil thought in my heart weighed down my consciousness like blood guiltiness, an' what long o' one thing an' what long of another—an' what long o' havin' nobody to 'spite in—ca'se you 'ceive yourself ef I had let on to anybody, they'd a' acted right on top of it, and what long o' your castin' me off an' 'spicionin' of me, I was almos' druv crazy, an' a most wished I had been born a Roman, so I might o' fessed to a priest who would o' 'vised me, an' been boun' not to tell. Oh! I had a hundred thousand millionf of thoughts that a most racked my head an' heart to pieces, cause they wur so unconsistin', for sometimes I thought my 'spicion was all a wicked 'ception o' the devil, an' sometimes I thought there might be truffe in it, but that long as he had never been heern tell of so long an' was clean gone, an' couldn't be cotch, an' no one was 'cused and in danger o' sufferin' for his 'fence—if he *did* 'fend—it wa'n't no use to say nothin' 'bout my thoughts, an' 'cuse your brother, an' 'grace your fam'ly an' mistify your feelin's for nothin'. Well, and then I thought, too, how he *might* be cotch an' might be *innocen'*, and then all along o' my wicked thoughts he might be hung upon *substantial infcrence*, or whatever the law *is* called which 'demns men for not 'mitting the crime—an' then I knew ef *that* come to pass it would break your heart to have your brother come to such an en', an' then I should jes a bought my freedom an' cut my own throat."

"Look a here, Prince! he wasn't my brother, an' you'll 'fen' me if you say he was, agin!—there!"

"Well, but ain't you satisfied *now*, Coral?"

"I don't know, Prince. I know I ought to be!—poor fellow! you have suffered so much!"

"You may say that! I could not keep altogether silent, neither—for one day I axes Mr. Hawk what he thinks has ever come of runaway Abram—an' I 'clare to my Lord ef he didn't give a sudden jump,—an' I seen that from that day, he had his 'spicions 'roused. He questioned of me, but I 'clared to my Lord what was the truffe, that I had never set eyes on Abram or hearn a single word of him since the day an'

hour he ran away! an' that I stuck to! Come, Coral, ain't you satisfied now?"

"Oh, Prince—poor fellow!"

"Won't you make frien's long o' me for true, now, Coral?"

"Oh, Prince, you know I suffered all along as much as you did—for see what a merry girl I used to was, an' what a sad woman I have been ever since."

"Well, it isn't too late to be happy yet—we'll make up for loss time."

"Oh, a great deal of time, Prince!—twenty years! Twenty years makes a very great deffunce in people's feelin's. I'm an old maid now—I'm thirty-five years old—I was but fifteen when we were going to be married, an' broke off—"

"Never min'. Let's go to church Sunday."

"'Tain't worth while *now*. I'm an old maid *now*," repeated Coral, sadly.

"Well, s'posin' you *is*—I ain't a been growin' younger all this time, as I knows of. Come, Coral, now, come! just 'sent to *this*. Go to church 'long o' me, Sunday."

"It ain't no use, Prince, now; 'sides, all the neighbors would laugh at us, an' call us two old fools."

"Well, let 'em laugh! This is a very sighin' worl', an' any body as raises a laugh 'forms a 'ligious duty—that's my belief—'sides which, they won't laugh at us forty or fifty years on the stretch, I reckon, an' that's the length o' time I 'spects to 'joy my life 'long o' you, Coral. Come, Coral, answer me."

"I shall have to answer you, ef it's only to get you off to see after marster's comforts agin he comes."

"Well, why don't you *do it?*"

"Well, then, Prince, I'll speak to Miss Ginnie when she comes, an' do you talk 'long o' marster, an' ef they two don't see anything foolish or unproper in our gettin' married at our time o' life, why, 'haps—min', I say *'haps*—I'll 'sider of it."

"Thanky, Coral! thanky! I knew you would listen to reason at las'—"

"There! Go along, Prince! don't be a fool! There! I do believe that's them now," said Coral, as the sound of wheels rolling up the carriage drive was heard.

"So it is, I 'clare!" said Prince, hurrying out to open the front door.

The whole party, consisting of Judge Washington, Virginia, Joseph Carey, Lord Cliffe, Magdalene and Theodore Hervey, entered the house, and were received by Coral in her capacity of housekeeper, who, with one of the maids, stood in readiness to attend the ladies to their chambers to change their travelling habits. Prince rendered the same service to the gentlemen.

In an hour after they were all assembled around the supper-table.

Their day's journey had been a short one, so that they were not constrained to retire early upon account of fatigue, and the long evening was passed very pleasantly in the saloon.

It was not until the next morning, after breakfast, that Judge Washington, as he sat in his library, asked for Adam Hawk, and was told that he had departed in haste to St. Leonards the day before. While still inquiring into the object of his errand, he was interrupted by a low knock at the door, and in compliance with his verbal permission to "come in," Adam Hawk entered. At a sign from his overseer, Judge Washington dismissed his attendant, and locked the door. Judge Washington and Adam Hawk remained in close confidential conversation for the space of an hour. At the end of that time, without dismissing his overseer, he rang for a servant, and sent and requested the immediate presence of Lord Cliffe, Mr. Carey and Mr. Hervey. When these gentlemen came in he begged them to be seated, and taking from the table by his side a written and folded paper, he said,

"Gentlemen, I have desired your presence here, this morning, for the purpose of making known to you a grave and important event which has relieved us all of a heavy and most painful responsibility. Gentlemen, the prisoner, Abram Pepper, committed upon Mr. Carey's testimony to answer the charge of assault and battery, with intent to kill Lord Cliffe, and suspected also of other and more heinous crimes of longer standing date—has been to-day arraigned before a higher tribunal. He departed this life at four o'clock this morning in the county jail, at St. Leonards, having previously made a full confession of all the crimes laid to his charge. I hold an attested copy of that confession in my hand, and painful as the perusal must be to us all, you will permit me to read it aloud."

This confession was a narrative of all the circumstances with which the reader has been recently made acquainted. While this scene was transpiring in the library, Coral was literally sitting at the feet of her young mistress, telling the story of her troubles, perplexities, and scruples, omitting everything, however, that could give Virginia pain, and speaking only of long misapprehension, long estrangement and recent reconciliation, and asking Miss Ginnie's advice about the propriety of being married at their "time of life."

"Yes, Coral, marry him," was Ginnie's good-natured verdict.

That morning Theodore Hervey intended to set out for the Old Forest Parsonage for the purpose of seeing and spending some time with his parents and sister. After he had bidden adieu to

each member of the family with the exception of Joseph Carey, he turned to shake hands with *him*—but Joseph, arising from his seat, said,

"No, Theodore, I will ride with you," and with a bow around, he left the room in company with his friend.

They mounted at the stables, and as they trotted side by side up the road, leading around by the back of the house, and through the forest towards the parsonage, Theodore said,

"Well, Joseph, have you considered my proposal?"

"I must answer your question by another—have *you* maturely deliberated upon your proposal?"

"Yes."

"And what is your present state of feeling upon the subject?"

"More anxious in favor of it than ever! My heart is set upon going, Joseph! *I must! I must*—set myself to some high and holy task—throw myself into some soul-absorbing work! *or* I shall madden!"

"Pardon me for so many close questions, dear Theodore, but where inclination would bias me so strongly, I must be guarded at all points, lest to secure a happiness for myself I trample upon the rights and the feelings of others—this is what I am about to ask—have you consulted your parents upon this proposed movement of yours? I know that you are 'of age,' indeed, but I know of no age that exonerates you from consulting your parents' happiness in any step of yours."

"My father and mother are in the prime of life—they are fondly attached to each other—they do not need me, at all—if they did, I would remain with them at any cost of suffering to myself—but it is not so!—and I, on my part, need, as a life-giver, change of scene and action—absorbing duty! Do *you* only consent, Joseph, and they *will*."

"You must remember that our plan—I say *our*, now, Theodore—requires the assent of the Board of Foreign Missions."

"Your influence can command that."

"I think that they will agree to anything I propose—and I think that for the next few years I can, with the help of the Lord, be *most* useful to the cause by remaining in America, and trying to arouse and keep alive in the Christian community, an interest in Foreign Missions. I think so—unless inclination strongly biasses my judgment, which I trust in God it is not permitted to do."

Joseph Carey spoke in all sincerity and simplicity, and Theodore said—

"Well! your final determination, dear Joseph—I am so anxious to be set at rest."

"As far as I am concerned, then, you may consider the arrangement concluded, and that you are to go out to India in my stead Don't clasp and press my hand, Theodore! I feel already like your executioner!"

"Oh, not so! I am too glad to go!"

After a little farther conversation, Joseph Carey promised to write to the Board of Foreign Missions, expressing his wish to resign his post for the present in favor of the Rev. Theodore Hervey, and strongly recommending the latter to the high consideration and respect of the Board. Soon after this they reached the door of the Parsonage. Joseph Carey turned to bid adieu to his friend, with the intention of riding back to Prospect Hall—but at Theodore's invitation and earnest entreaty, he dismounted, entered the house, and spent the evening with the family.

A fortnight from this time, Joseph Carey received a favorable reply from the Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, and hastened with the letter to the parsonage. And now, for the first time, Theodore Hervey broached the subject to his family. His parents were not in the least surprised at the news—nor did they, in the slightest degree, disapprove of the proposed measure—they said that of late years they had marked out between themselves just such a career for Theodore and *Helen*—for that Helen must wish to go with her brother, and that, considering the brother and sister singularly adapted to the work, they could not object.

"Yes, Theodore," said Helen, passing her arm around his neck, "yes, Theodore! You shall not go alone! I will accompany you, my dear brother!"

"But our mother and father, Helen! how can you think of leaving them?" asked Theodore, when the first effect of the astonishment that had stricken him silent was at an end."

"Our mother and father are all in all to each other, Theodore. They do not need me to make them happy—if I were married they would lose me all the same, and to a stranger! Besides they love *you* so well, dear Theodore, that they would much prefer to have me go with you."

"Yes, Theodore," interposed the mother, "we should be much happier to know that Helen was with you, assisting, comforting and cheering you, than even to have her at home!"

"But to lose *both* of your children, my dear mother!"

"I have their father, child."

"And she will have *you* also, by-and-by. You will both return to us in happier times," said the father.

There was much more conversation—but finally it was agreed on all hands, that the brother and sister should go out to India in company.

This plan met Joseph Carey's highest approval.

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It was now Spring—and the Missionaries to India were to sail early in the Summer. It was now therefore arranged that the marriage of Joseph Carey and Virginia Washington, should take place at an early day, as Joseph was anxious that his friend, Mr. Hervey, should not only be present at his marriage, but perform the ceremony; and as Theodore was equally desirous of officiating.

Lord and Lady Cliffe yielded to the solicitations of their friends, and consented to remain at Prospect Hall until after the wedding.

It was on the first of May, in the presence of a small but select company, that Joseph Carey and Virginia Washington were united in marriage, by the Rev. Theodore Hervey.

On the seventh of the next month, Theodore and Helen Hervey sailed for India.

And upon the fifteenth, Lord and Lady Cliffe, bidding adieu to their friends, set out for Norfolk, whence they embarked for England.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.

Of the present much is bright
And in the coming years I see
A brilliant and a cheering light,
Which burns before you constantly.
W. D. Gallagher.

"Catastrophes, denouements, etcetera, are violent or extraordinary events, occurring but once in a book or a lifetime—give us an after glimpse of the family," said a dear friend to me, the other day; and as her request was seconded and enforced by several other voices—and as no one entered a *demurrer*, I comply by giving a short account of the last time I had the happiness of meeting the people in whose "fortunes, good or bad," I have been trying to interest you.

It was the first of September, and the season at Shannondale Springs—where we had been spending the summer—was just over. Being very unwilling to return to the dust and heat of Washington City, in the hottest and dryest month of the year, we were casting about for a healthy, retired, and comfortable country house in which to board during September, when our eyes were attracted to a notice of a great Agricultural Fair, then being held at the village of Heathville, near the sea coast. And as we had never had the benefit of seeing such a festival, we decided to go to Heathville, where we could first receive the pleasure and instruction to be derived from witnessing such an exhibition—and *afterward*—for a month, the comfort, seclusion, and repose we required. Our arrangements were all soon completed, and we set out.

It was late on Friday night when we arrived at the hotel at Heathville, which we found crowded with company from all parts of the State—not a fashionable company, such as annually throngs to the watering places—but one composed of substantial farmers, gentlemen planters, thrifty housekeepers, and industrious girls—all emulous of distinction in their different but kindred spheres,—of—farming, grazing, stock-breeding, home manufactures, and domestic economy.—We heard that the next day—Saturday—was the last day of the Fair. The next morning was gorgeously bright, the village presented a most cheerful and animated appearance—the streets were filled with people, in their gay holiday attire, and the green around the village was "lit up" with dazzling white tents. At a greater distance were enclosures, occupied by very fine-looking show cattle. We were informed that farmers and planters within twelve miles, or so, came with their families every morning, and departed every night. Those only who came from greater distances put up in the village—some boarding at the hotels, some living in tents.

After an early breakfast we walked to the temporary building in which the Fair was held.

It was an open shed, in the form of the letter M, having a middle principal entrance, and one each side. The roof, instead of being covered with boards, was thatched with cedar, pine, and *lignum vitæ*—the posts supporting the roof were wound around and completely hidden by the same brilliant evergreens—the whole erection presented the appearance of a vast, beautiful temple, covered entirely with foliage. Over the arch of the main entrance was the motto—"Liberty and Union;"—over the right hand entrance were the words—"Friendship, Truth, Love;"—over the left—"Labor, Hope, Patience." The mottoes, all in letters formed of silver stars, flashed brightly out from the dark, surrounding foliage.

All in, and out, and around about this Temple of Ceres, were crowds of gaily dressed men, women and children. It was indeed a joyous and inspiring scene, and if the temple was—of its kind—grand and beautiful without, what was it, with all its appointments, within? In truth, it passes description.

Here were stalls, gayly decked with flowers and evergreens, or with festoons of cloth and flags—and here was the perfection of every variety of fruit and flowers the climate and soil could be made to produce, and the master-pieces of every description of home manufacture, for which the housekeepers of Virginia are distinguished—not in confusion, but all arranged in systematic and beautiful order.

We were rambling on through the Fair, dazzled and bewildered by the exuberant abundance

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—and admiring the master-pieces of skill and industry, when our attention was attracted and rivetted by one stall, pre-eminent for the taste and elegance of its arrangement, as well as for the wealth of its industrial display.

This stall was divided into three compartments. On the centre was arranged specimens of domestic cookery—a premium ham, a medal loaf of bread, butter, cakes, sweetmeats, etc. On the right hand were exhibited fruits and flowers. On the left hand, specimens of home manufactures, webs of cotton, woollen and linen cloth, quilts, hosiery, etcetera. But the crowning glory of this compartment, and indeed, of the whole stall, and perhaps of the whole Fair, was an elegant white knotted counterpane, with a deep, rich fringe, that was displayed to great advantage by being hung in graceful festoons behind the stall. This stall was at present attended by a genteel-looking mulatto servant, with two assistants. The back of the former happened to be turned towards us, yet still we thought that there was something familiar in her general appearance and air. She turned around, and we recognized Coral Pepper, now a buxom, middle-aged, motherly-looking matron. As she looked up, and our eyes met, we both smiled, and we had just spoken to her when our attention was suddenly attracted, and our interest strongly excited in another direction. "That is *very beautiful!* I do so much admire to see a mother, still so young and beautiful as Mrs. Carey, escorted by her son," said a voice at my elbow—and I turned to see—a truly lovely and lovable pair, slowly, but smilingly, making their way through the crowd, towards us. It was Virginia Carey and her eldest son—there was, indeed, no mistaking that beautiful face, with its clear eyes serenely shining with the light of love and quiet joy. Time had been—as every one else felt constrained to be—*very* good to Virginia—he had taken nothing, but given everything.—Her graceful form had acquired the very contour that it had wanted; her once intensely brilliant complexion was of a more delicate, roseate shade, but then her cheek was rounder, and her golden-red hair, that still hung in superb masses of ringlets down each side her face—was now of a richer and darker hue, approaching a warm, brilliant auburn. She was tastefully dressed for the occasion, in a mazarine blue cashmere habit, and a drawn silk bonnet, of the same color and shade. In less time than I have taken to describe her, she had reached the stall, and warmly grasped the hand I had held out to greet her.

"Is Mr. Carey here?" I inquired.

"No, he is particularly engaged at home with some of his friends. Indeed, I myself should not have left them to-day, except for my stall—but here is his representative, who, though but twelve years old, is so well grown as to be as tall as his mother. My eldest son, Washington Carey," she added, playfully presenting the lad. "Come home with me this evening, and I will show you his three brothers and his sister, all strangers to you, but then I will also introduce you to some *old acquaintances*, who are now on a visit to us."

Of course, reader, you know I went.

We set out early, and reached Prospect Plains in good season. After changing our travelling habits, we entered the drawing-room, which was cheerfully lighted up, and then occupied by three ladies only, in two of whom I respectively recognized Lady Cliffe and Helen Hervey. The third was a stranger. Lady Cliffe was the same magnificent and imposing woman we had formerly known her to be. Helen Hervey looked so healthful and beautiful, that I should scarcely have recognized her, but for the peculiar individuality of countenance, the midnight eyes, eyebrows and hair. I was surprised and delighted when Helen was introduced to me as "Mrs. Shields," and my surprise and delight were complete, when the strange lady, a lovely, intellectual, and devout looking girl was presented as "Mrs. Theodore Hervey."

Soon after these mutual introductions were over, the gentlemen of the party, consisting of Lord Cliffe, Mr. Hervey, Mr. Carey, and Judge Washington, now a very white headed, but hale old gentleman, entered from the dining room, and then conversation became general.

As soon as every one was engaged, and I found myself in a distant corner with Mrs. Carey, she gave me these particulars—That Theodore and Helen Hervey, after many years absence, had returned to visit their native country and their parents. That at Richmond, Theodore had renewed an acquaintance with a young lady, the daughter of Major Lincoln, which acquaintance had ripened into a mutual, deep, and lasting esteem and affection, and that they had been recently married, and were to go out to India in the Spring. That Helen having attained robust health, and being superseded in her office of consoler to her brother, had at last rewarded the long and faithful attachment of Broke Shield. They lived with the old parents at the parsonage. They were present at the hall to meet Lord and Lady Cliffe, who had just arrived from England on a visit. That Lord and Lady Cliffe would spend the Autumn, Winter, and Spring, at Prospect Plains. That in the early part of the Summer, they would sail for England.

"And," added Ginnie, in conclusion, "we are all going with them, to be present at the World's Fair—with the Lord's blessing.

THE END.

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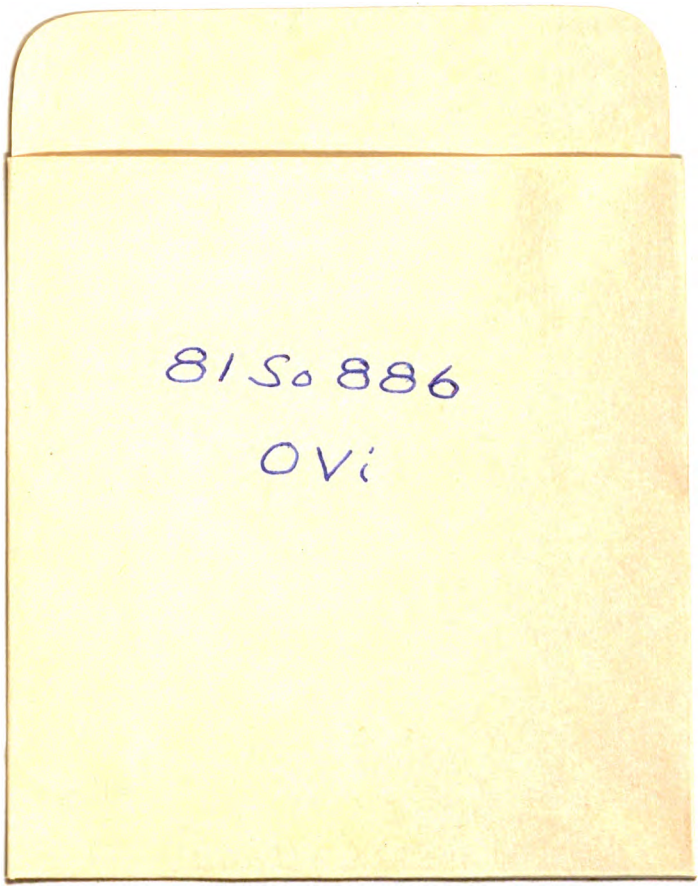

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